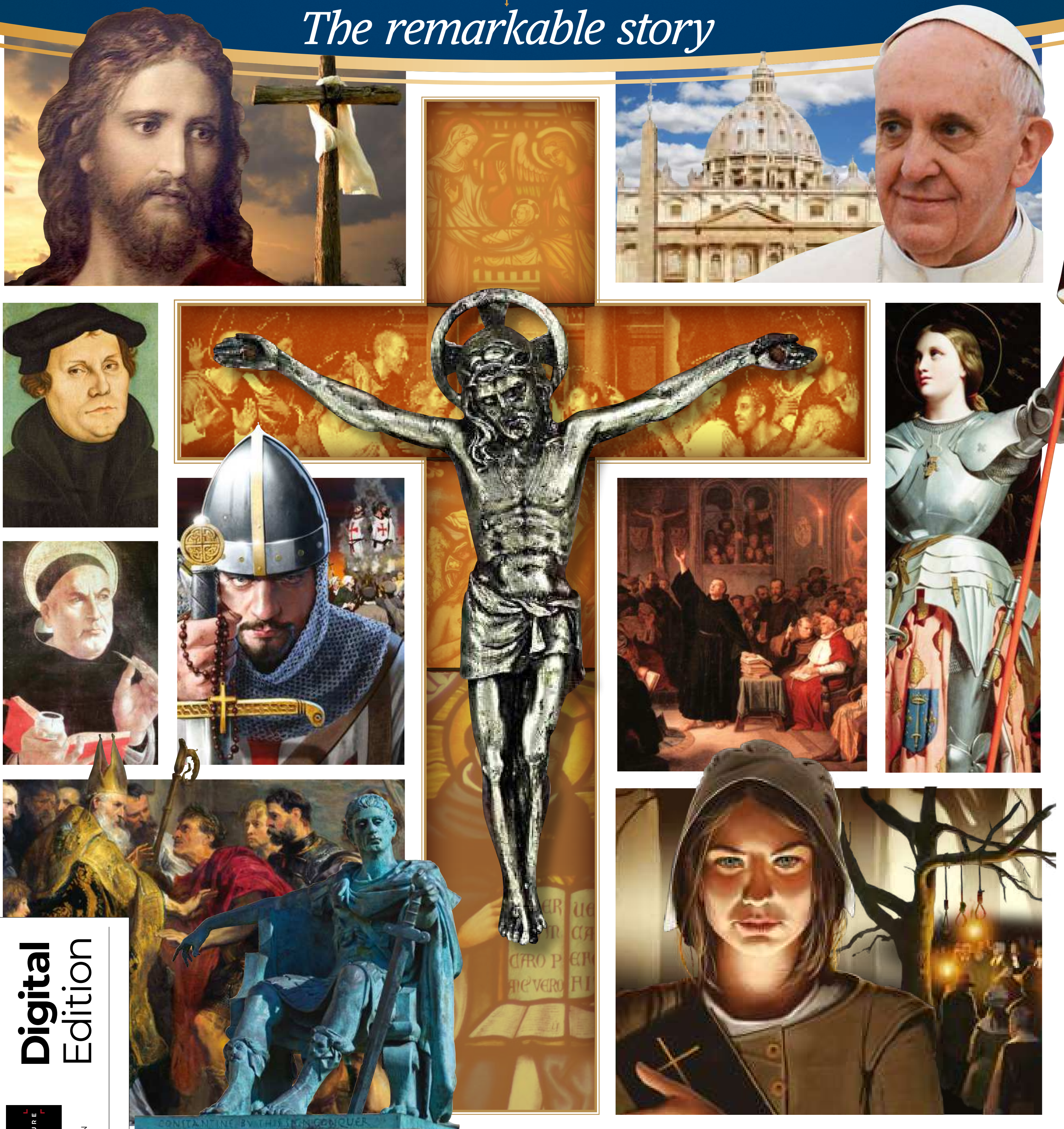
NEW

ALL ABOUT HISTORY
Book of

CHRISTIANITY

The remarkable story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SCHISMS • CRUSADES • ART • SAINTS & HERETICS

Digital Edition

FUTURE

SIXTH EDITION

Welcome to

ALL ABOUT HISTORY
Book of

CHRISTIANITY

The story of Christianity is arguably history's most extraordinary – the journey of an esoteric cult of personality to become the world's biggest religion, with over 2 billion followers across the globe. From its humble beginnings, shrouded in myth and mystery, to its rise to imperial status, the All About History Book of Christianity tells a story that's been more than 2,000 years in the making. Covering the myriad crusades, schisms, movements and individuals that have made Christianity what it is today, this is a must-read for curious enthusiasts and history buffs alike. Discover how Christians went from being a minority group persecuted by the Roman state to becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire, gaining followers exponentially. Follow England's King Richard the Lionheart on his quest to liberate the Holy Land and learn about the founding of the Knights Templar. Understand the roots of the Protestant Reformation and how it spread across Europe, changing Christianity forever, and find out how the Church navigated the devastating global conflicts of the 20th century.

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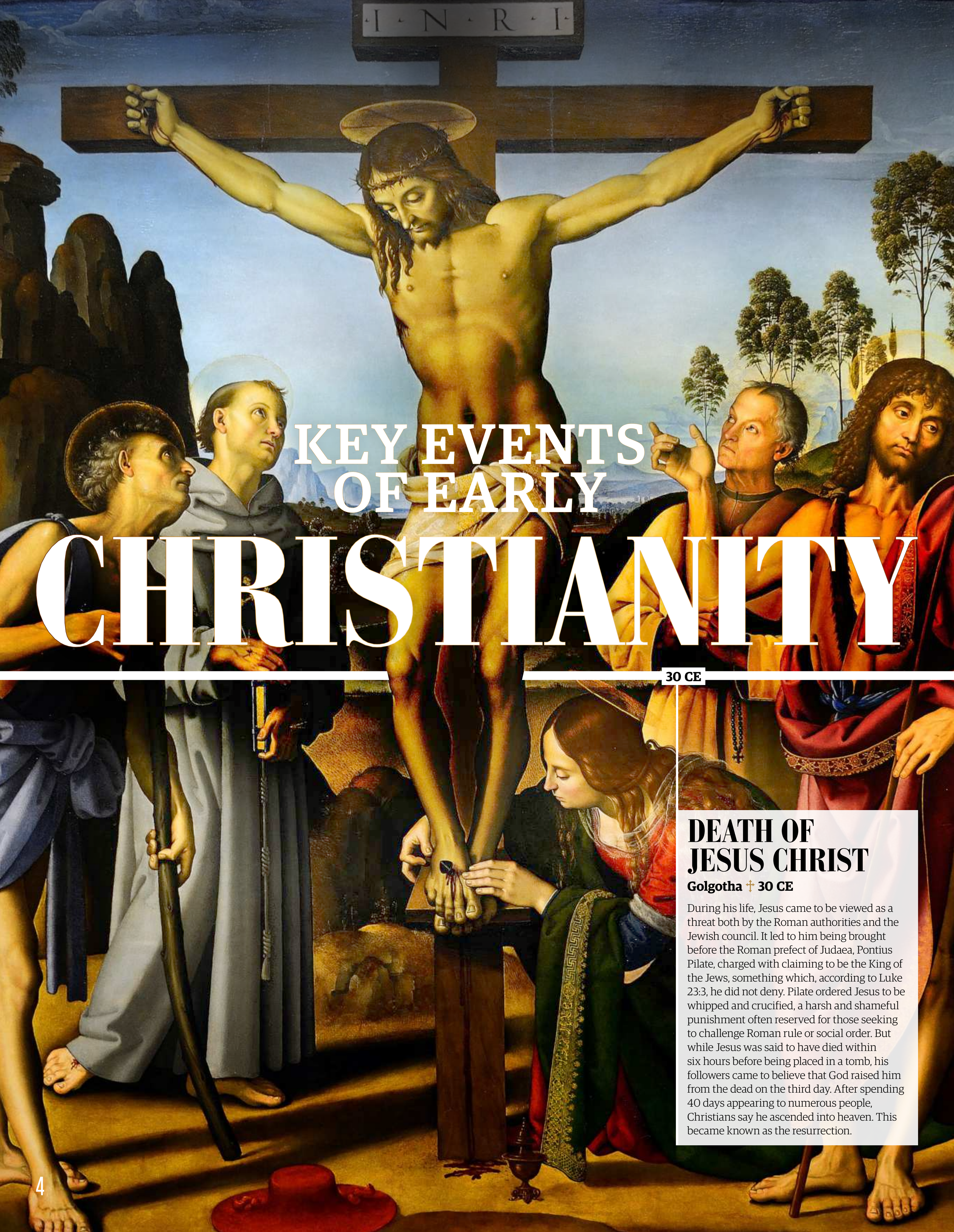


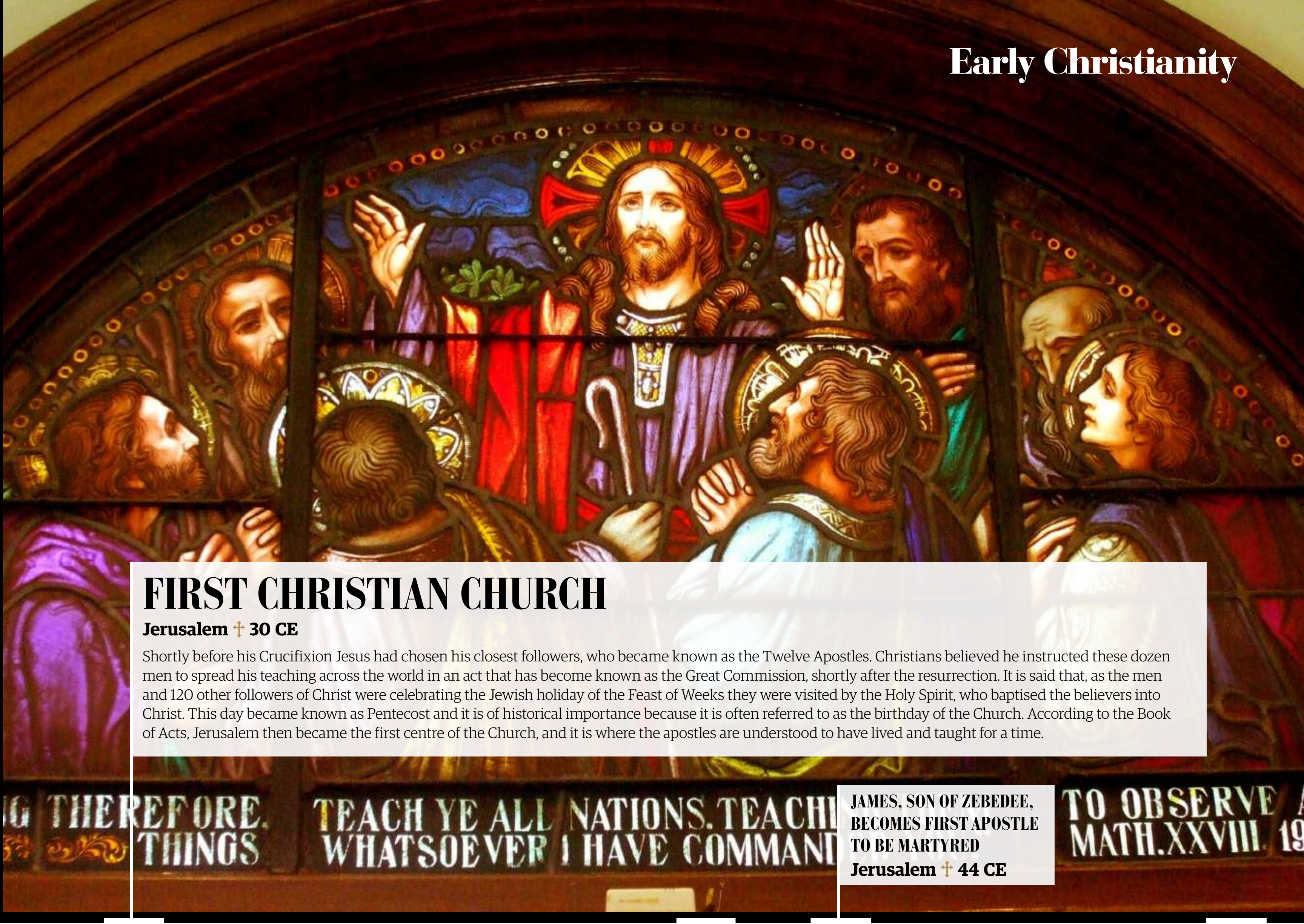
KEY EVENTS OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

30 CE

DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

Golgotha ✝ 30 CE

During his life, Jesus came to be viewed as a threat both by the Roman authorities and the Jewish council. It led to him being brought before the Roman prefect of Judaea, Pontius Pilate, charged with claiming to be the King of the Jews, something which, according to Luke 23:3, he did not deny. Pilate ordered Jesus to be whipped and crucified, a harsh and shameful punishment often reserved for those seeking to challenge Roman rule or social order. But while Jesus was said to have died within six hours before being placed in a tomb, his followers came to believe that God raised him from the dead on the third day. After spending 40 days appearing to numerous people, Christians say he ascended into heaven. This became known as the resurrection.


THEREFORE TEACH YE ALL NATIONS. TEACHI
THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMAND
TO OBSERVE
MATH.XXVIII. 19

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Jerusalem † 30 CE

Shortly before his Crucifixion Jesus had chosen his closest followers, who became known as the Twelve Apostles. Christians believed he instructed these dozen men to spread his teaching across the world in an act that has become known as the Great Commission, shortly after the resurrection. It is said that, as the men and 120 other followers of Christ were celebrating the Jewish holiday of the Feast of Weeks they were visited by the Holy Spirit, who baptised the believers into Christ. This day became known as Pentecost and it is of historical importance because it is often referred to as the birthday of the Church. According to the Book of Acts, Jerusalem then became the first centre of the Church, and it is where the apostles are understood to have lived and taught for a time.

JAMES, SON OF ZEBEDEE, BECOMES FIRST APOSTLE TO BE MARTYRED

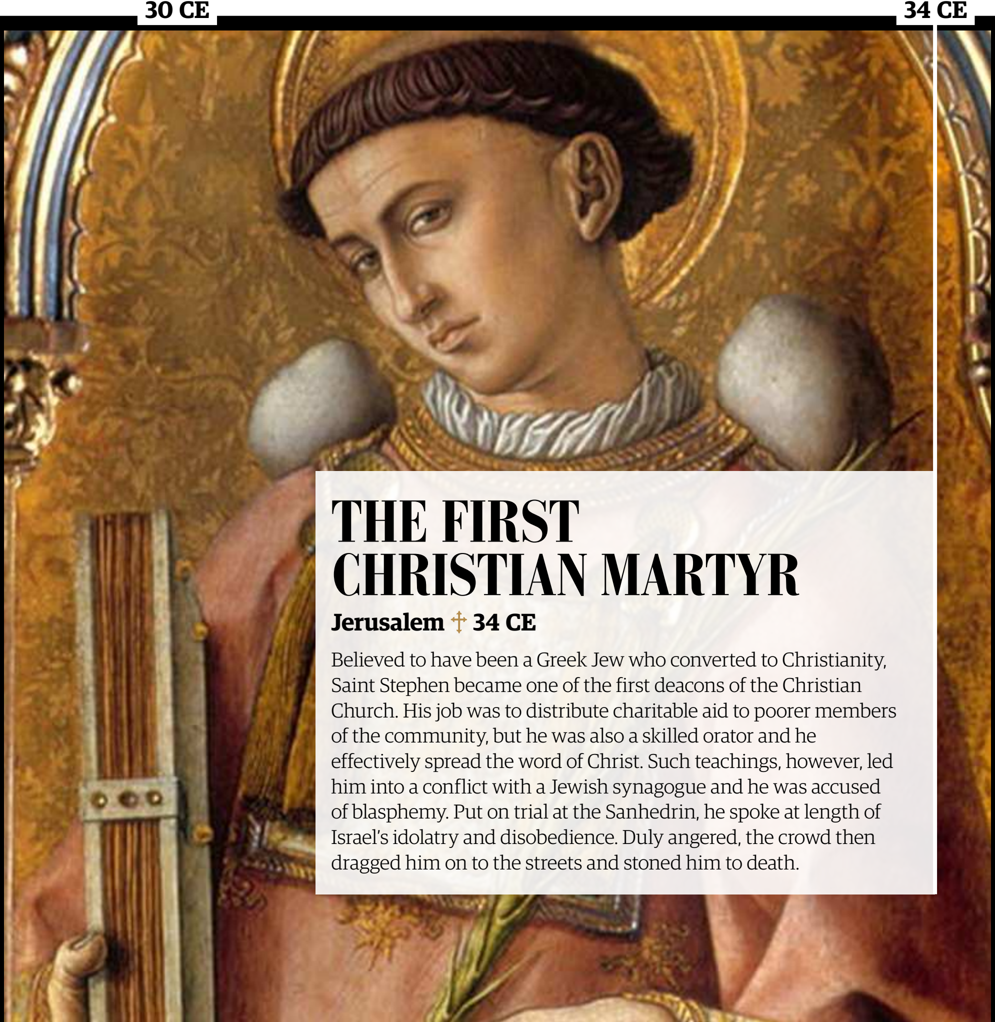
Jerusalem † 44 CE

30 CE

34 CE

44 CE

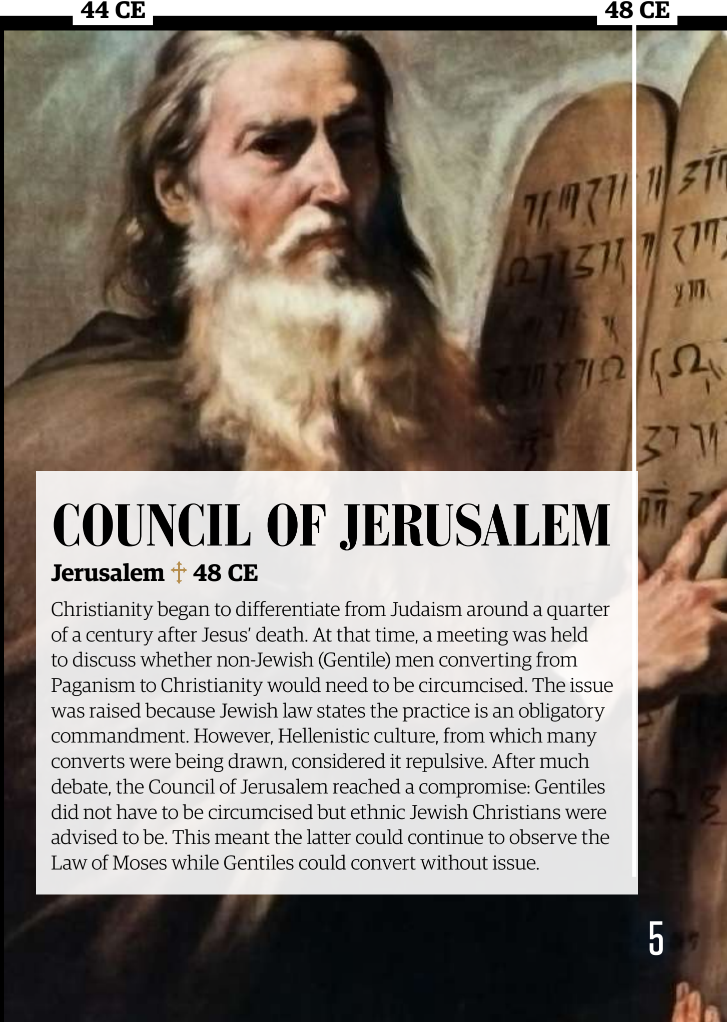
48 CE



THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR

Jerusalem † 34 CE

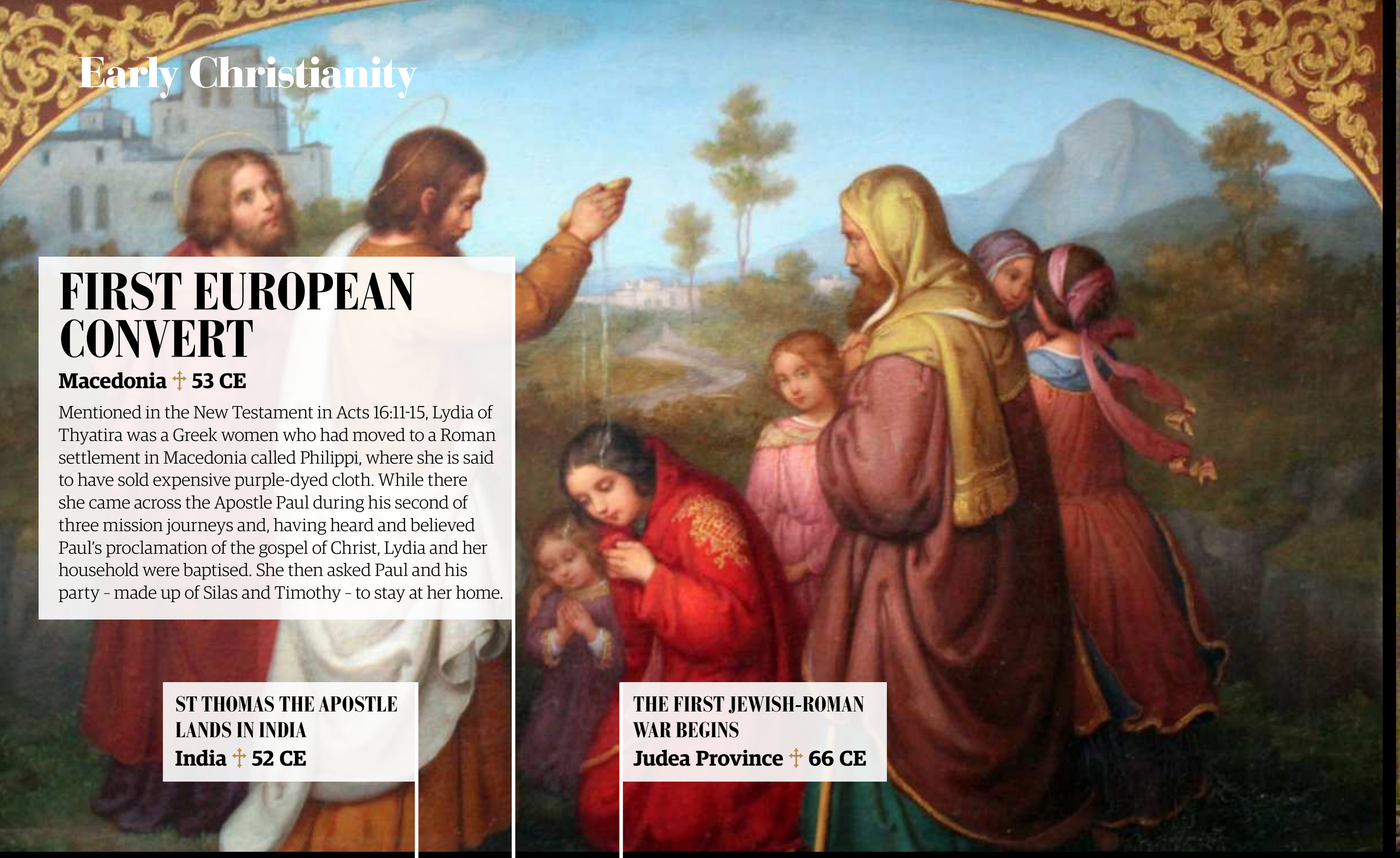
Believed to have been a Greek Jew who converted to Christianity, Saint Stephen became one of the first deacons of the Christian Church. His job was to distribute charitable aid to poorer members of the community, but he was also a skilled orator and he effectively spread the word of Christ. Such teachings, however, led him into a conflict with a Jewish synagogue and he was accused of blasphemy. Put on trial at the Sanhedrin, he spoke at length of Israel's idolatry and disobedience. Duly angered, the crowd then dragged him on to the streets and stoned him to death.



COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

Jerusalem † 48 CE

Christianity began to differentiate from Judaism around a quarter of a century after Jesus' death. At that time, a meeting was held to discuss whether non-Jewish (Gentile) men converting from Paganism to Christianity would need to be circumcised. The issue was raised because Jewish law states the practice is an obligatory commandment. However, Hellenistic culture, from which many converts were being drawn, considered it repulsive. After much debate, the Council of Jerusalem reached a compromise: Gentiles did not have to be circumcised but ethnic Jewish Christians were advised to be. This meant the latter could continue to observe the Law of Moses while Gentiles could convert without issue.



FIRST EUROPEAN CONVERT

Macedonia † 53 CE

Mentioned in the New Testament in Acts 16:11-15, Lydia of Thyatira was a Greek women who had moved to a Roman settlement in Macedonia called Philippi, where she is said to have sold expensive purple-dyed cloth. While there she came across the Apostle Paul during his second of three mission journeys and, having heard and believed Paul's proclamation of the gospel of Christ, Lydia and her household were baptised. She then asked Paul and his party – made up of Silas and Timothy – to stay at her home.

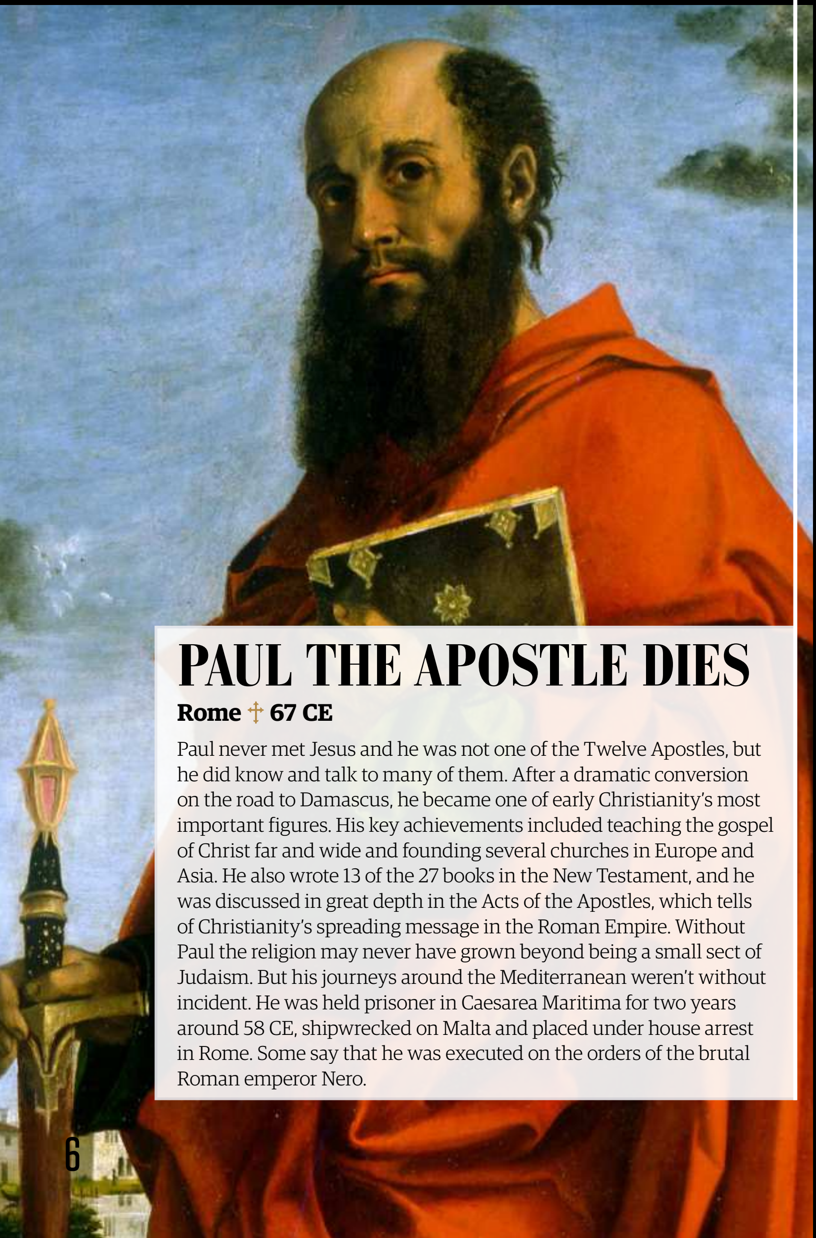
ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE LANDS IN INDIA

India † 52 CE

THE FIRST JEWISH-ROMAN WAR BEGINS

Judea Province † 66 CE

52 CE 53 CE 66 CE 67 CE 67 CE 70 CE



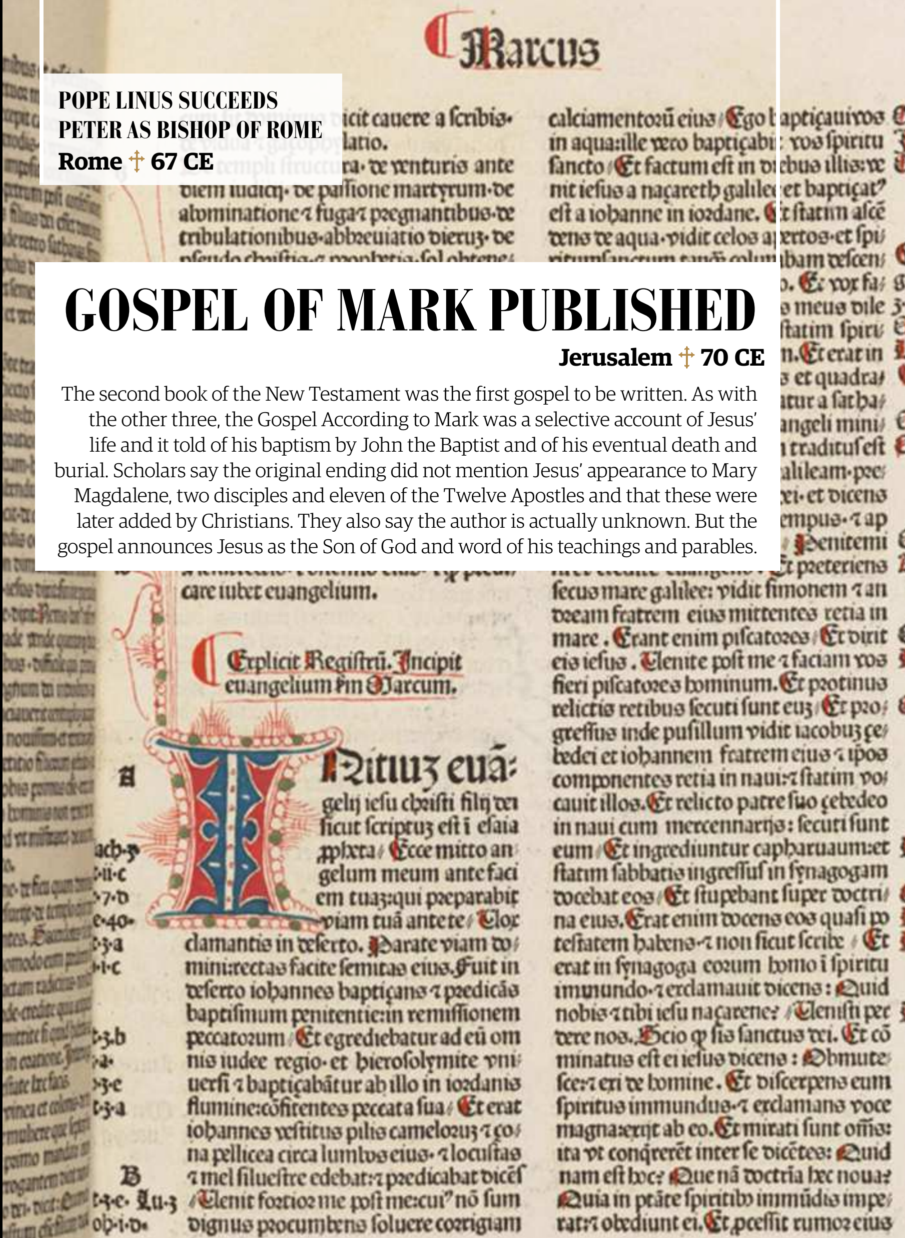
PAUL THE APOSTLE DIES

Rome † 67 CE

Paul never met Jesus and he was not one of the Twelve Apostles, but he did know and talk to many of them. After a dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus, he became one of early Christianity's most important figures. His key achievements included teaching the gospel of Christ far and wide and founding several churches in Europe and Asia. He also wrote 13 of the 27 books in the New Testament, and he was discussed in great depth in the Acts of the Apostles, which tells of Christianity's spreading message in the Roman Empire. Without Paul the religion may never have grown beyond being a small sect of Judaism. But his journeys around the Mediterranean weren't without incident. He was held prisoner in Caesarea Maritima for two years around 58 CE, shipwrecked on Malta and placed under house arrest in Rome. Some say that he was executed on the orders of the brutal Roman emperor Nero.

POPE LINUS SUCCEEDS PETER AS BISHOP OF ROME

Rome † 67 CE



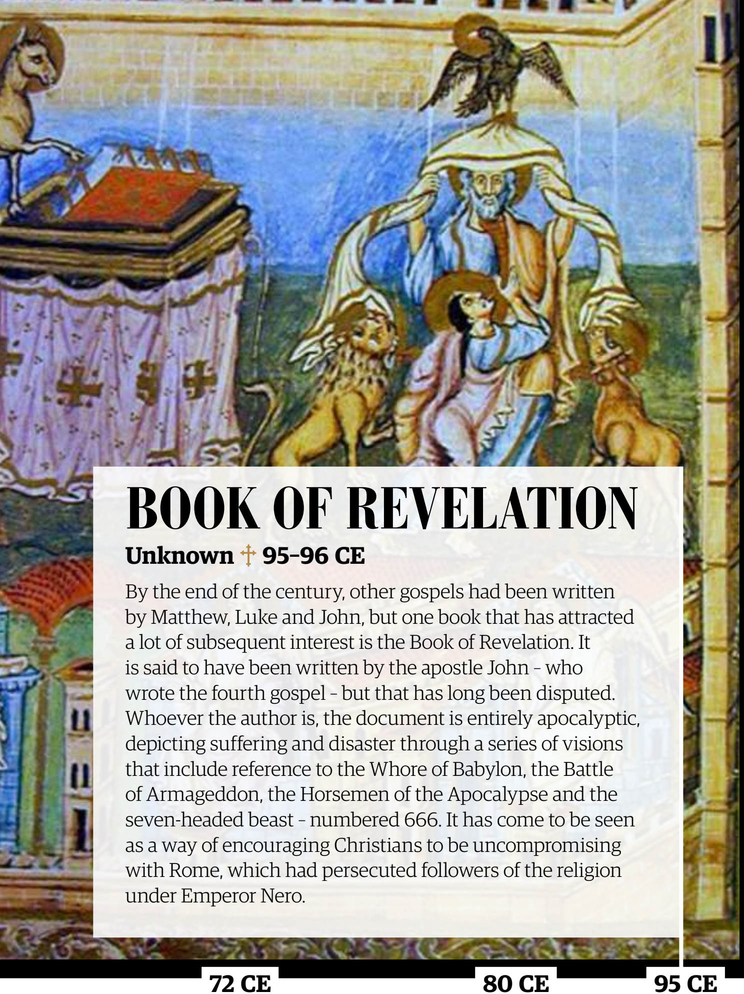
Marcus

Explicit Regiſtrū. Incipit euangelium ſm Marcum.

GOSPEL OF MARK PUBLISHED

Jerusalem † 70 CE

The second book of the New Testament was the first gospel to be written. As with the other three, the Gospel According to Mark was a selective account of Jesus' life and it told of his baptism by John the Baptist and of his eventual death and burial. Scholars say the original ending did not mention Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene, two disciples and eleven of the Twelve Apostles and that these were later added by Christians. They also say the author is actually unknown. But the gospel announces Jesus as the Son of God and word of his teachings and parables.



BOOK OF REVELATION

Unknown † 95–96 CE

By the end of the century, other gospels had been written by Matthew, Luke and John, but one book that has attracted a lot of subsequent interest is the Book of Revelation. It is said to have been written by the apostle John – who wrote the fourth gospel – but that has long been disputed. Whoever the author is, the document is entirely apocalyptic, depicting suffering and disaster through a series of visions that include reference to the Whore of Babylon, the Battle of Armageddon, the Horsemen of the Apocalypse and the seven-headed beast – numbered 666. It has come to be seen as a way of encouraging Christians to be uncompromising with Rome, which had persecuted followers of the religion under Emperor Nero.

FIRST EPISTLE OF CLEMENT

Rome † 95–96 CE

Not all Christian documents were included in the canon of the New Testament. Many others would form part of a collection known as the Apostolic Fathers, which included writings from Christian theologians such as Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Rome, Polycarp of Smyrna, Didache and Shepherd of Hermas. They represented a generation that had been in contact with the Twelve Apostles, and they were very popular. The First Epistle of Clement was a letter addressed to the Christians in the city of Corinth, and it is understood to be the earliest example of such documents. The letter suggested that the apostle Peter – leader of the disciples – was martyred in Rome in 64 CE by being crucified upside down. This was requested by Peter, who believed himself unworthy of dying in the same manner as Jesus. But the letter mainly expressed concern that the Corinthian Church was deposing older men from the ministry. Quoting extensively from the Old Testament, it called for peace and reconciliation. It urged people to look to Jesus and the apostles as examples.

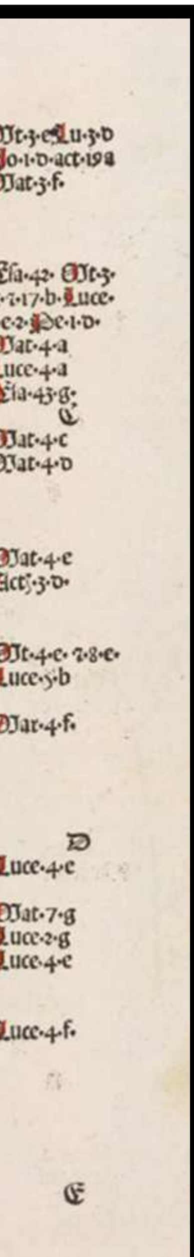
72 CE

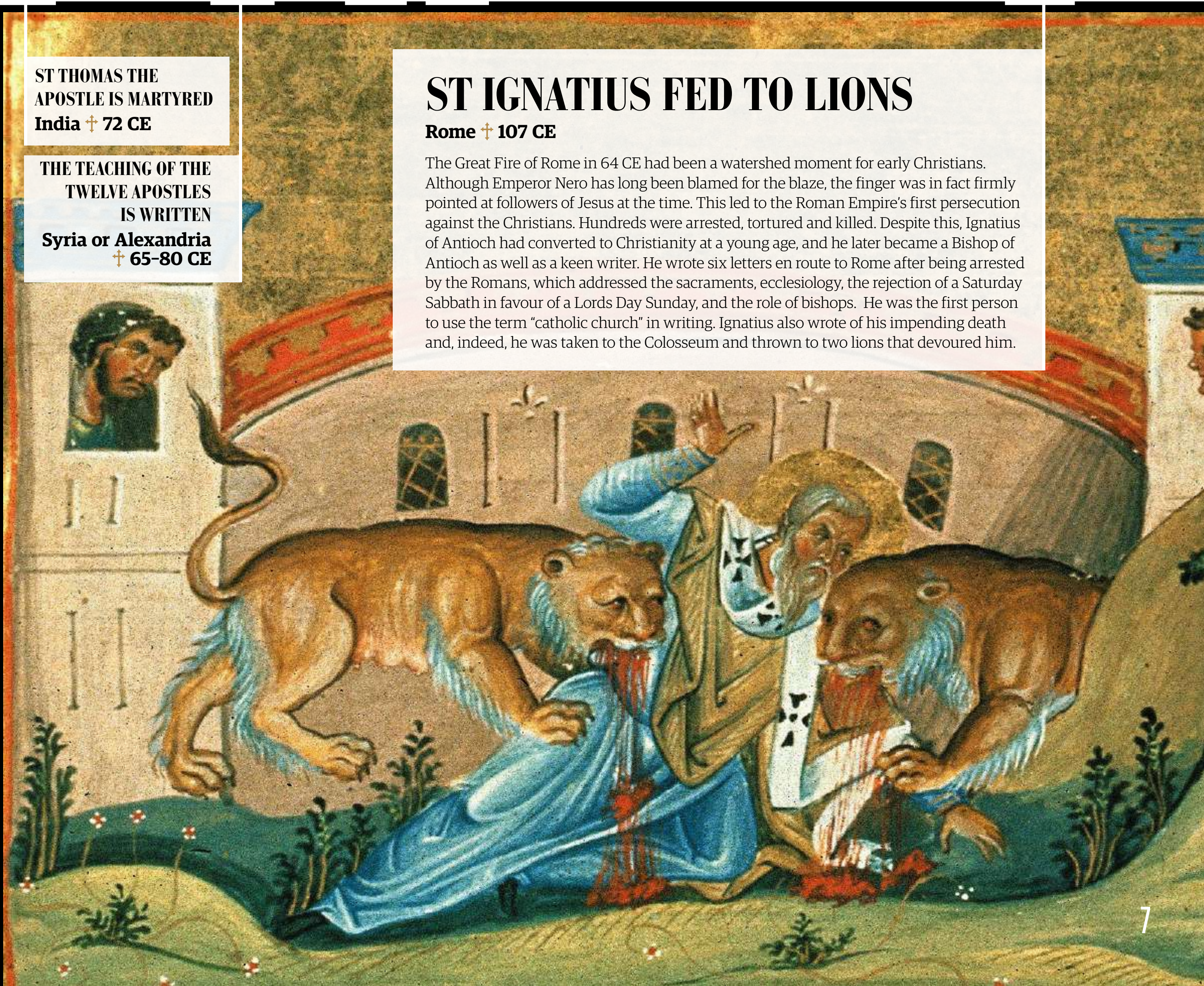
80 CE

95 CE

96 CE

107 CE





ST THOMAS THE APOSTLE IS MARTYRED

India † 72 CE

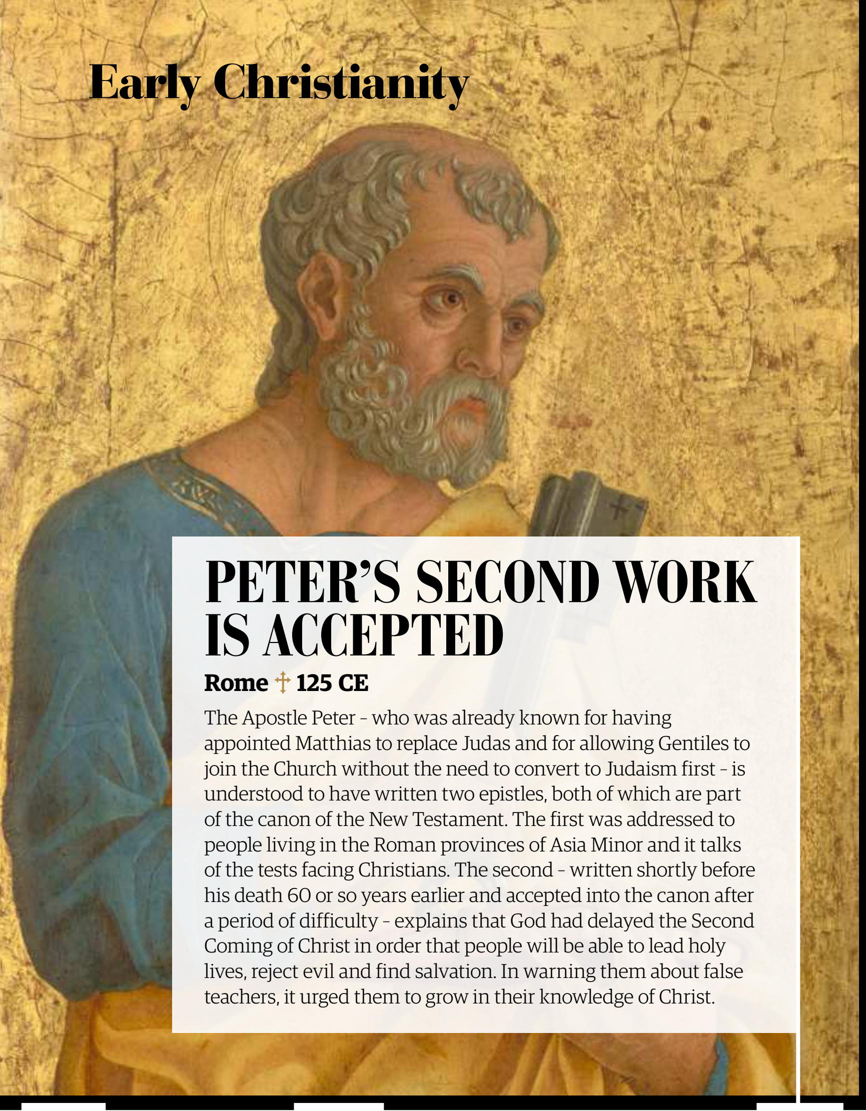
THE TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES IS WRITTEN

Syria or Alexandria † 65–80 CE

ST IGNATIUS FED TO LIONS

Rome † 107 CE

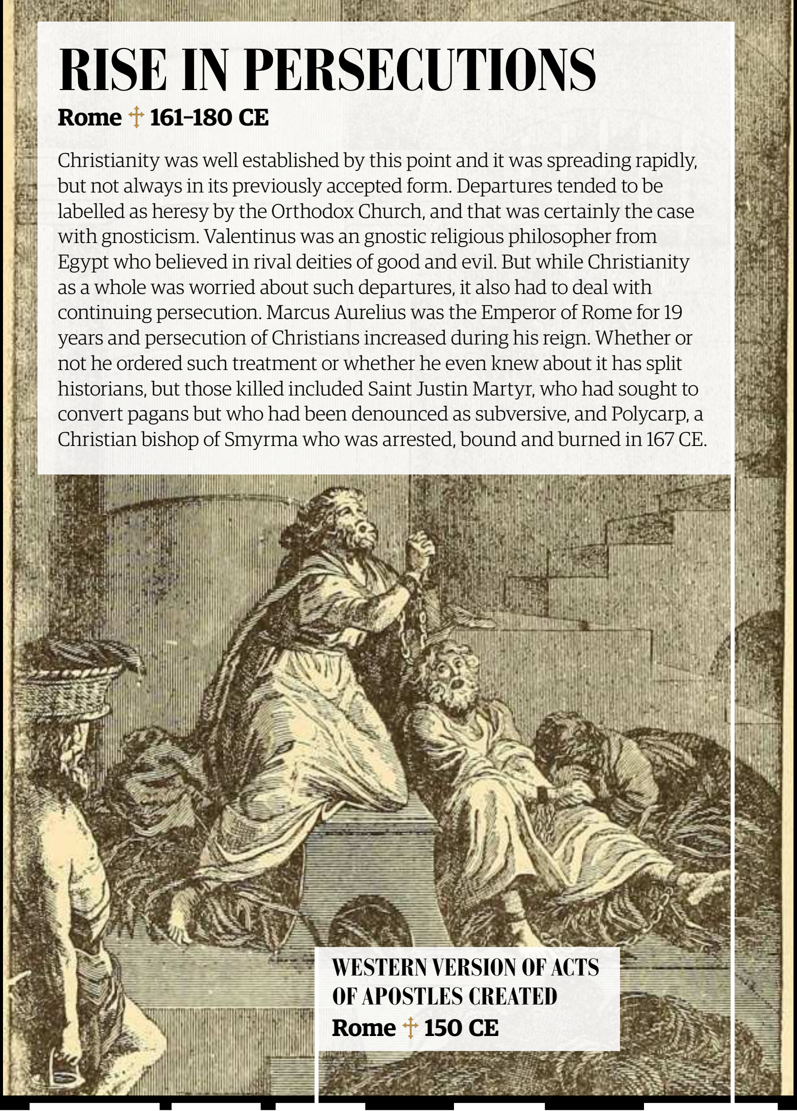
The Great Fire of Rome in 64 CE had been a watershed moment for early Christians. Although Emperor Nero has long been blamed for the blaze, the finger was in fact firmly pointed at followers of Jesus at the time. This led to the Roman Empire's first persecution against the Christians. Hundreds were arrested, tortured and killed. Despite this, Ignatius of Antioch had converted to Christianity at a young age, and he later became a Bishop of Antioch as well as a keen writer. He wrote six letters en route to Rome after being arrested by the Romans, which addressed the sacraments, ecclesiology, the rejection of a Saturday Sabbath in favour of a Lords Day Sunday, and the role of bishops. He was the first person to use the term "catholic church" in writing. Ignatius also wrote of his impending death and, indeed, he was taken to the Colosseum and thrown to two lions that devoured him.



PETER'S SECOND WORK IS ACCEPTED

Rome † 125 CE

The Apostle Peter – who was already known for having appointed Matthias to replace Judas and for allowing Gentiles to join the Church without the need to convert to Judaism first – is understood to have written two epistles, both of which are part of the canon of the New Testament. The first was addressed to people living in the Roman provinces of Asia Minor and it talks of the tests facing Christians. The second – written shortly before his death 60 or so years earlier and accepted into the canon after a period of difficulty – explains that God had delayed the Second Coming of Christ in order that people will be able to lead holy lives, reject evil and find salvation. In warning them about false teachers, it urged them to grow in their knowledge of Christ.



RISE IN PERSECUTIONS

Rome † 161–180 CE

Christianity was well established by this point and it was spreading rapidly, but not always in its previously accepted form. Departures tended to be labelled as heresy by the Orthodox Church, and that was certainly the case with gnosticism. Valentinus was an gnostic religious philosopher from Egypt who believed in rival deities of good and evil. But while Christianity as a whole was worried about such departures, it also had to deal with continuing persecution. Marcus Aurelius was the Emperor of Rome for 19 years and persecution of Christians increased during his reign. Whether or not he ordered such treatment or whether he even knew about it has split historians, but those killed included Saint Justin Martyr, who had sought to convert pagans but who had been denounced as subversive, and Polycarp, a Christian bishop of Smyrma who was arrested, bound and burned in 167 CE.

WESTERN VERSION OF ACTS OF APOSTLES CREATED

Rome † 150 CE

112 CE · 120 CE · 125 CE · 132-136 CE · 144 CE · 150 CE · 160 CE · 161–180 CE

EMPEROR TRAJAN TELLS ROMAN GOVERNOR OF PONTUS-BITHYNIA THAT PUNISHING CHRISTIANS IS "CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF OUR TIMES"

Rome † 112 CE

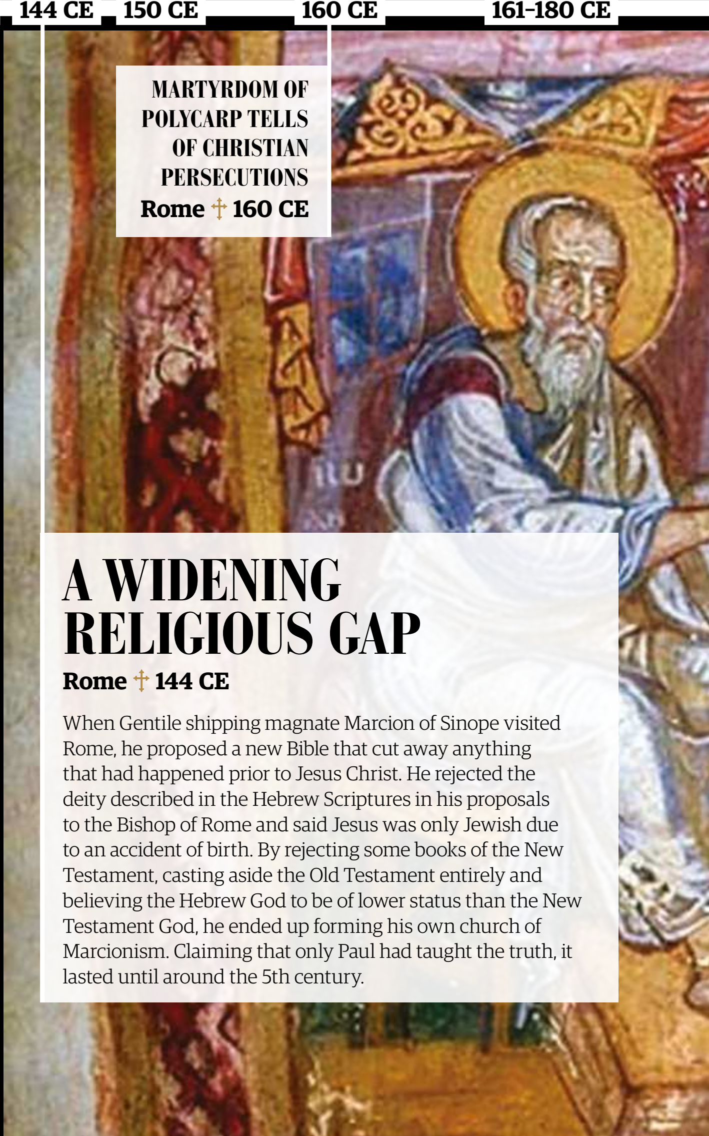
RABBI TARFON SWORE TO BURN CHRISTIAN BOOKS

Judea Province † 120 CE

BAR KOKHBA'S REVOLT

Jerusalem † 132-136 CE

The Jews rose up against the Roman Empire in Judaea during the First Jewish-Roman War of 66-73 CE. It led to the Romans being expelled from Jerusalem, only for the rebellion to be later crushed on the orders of Emperor Nero. A second conflict – the Kitos War – was also fought, albeit outside the Judaea Province. A third war later erupted that came to be known as the Bar Kokhba Revolt. Sparked by Emperor Hadrian, who wanted to found a colony on the site of Jerusalem, and by religious and political tension, the Messianic figure Bar Kokhba hoped to drive their enemy away. But the Romans were too strong for them; more than 580,000 Jews died and many others were sold into slavery. Large Judean communities were dispersed and Jews – along with Jewish Christians – were banned from entering Jerusalem as harsh new regulations were quickly implemented as punishment.



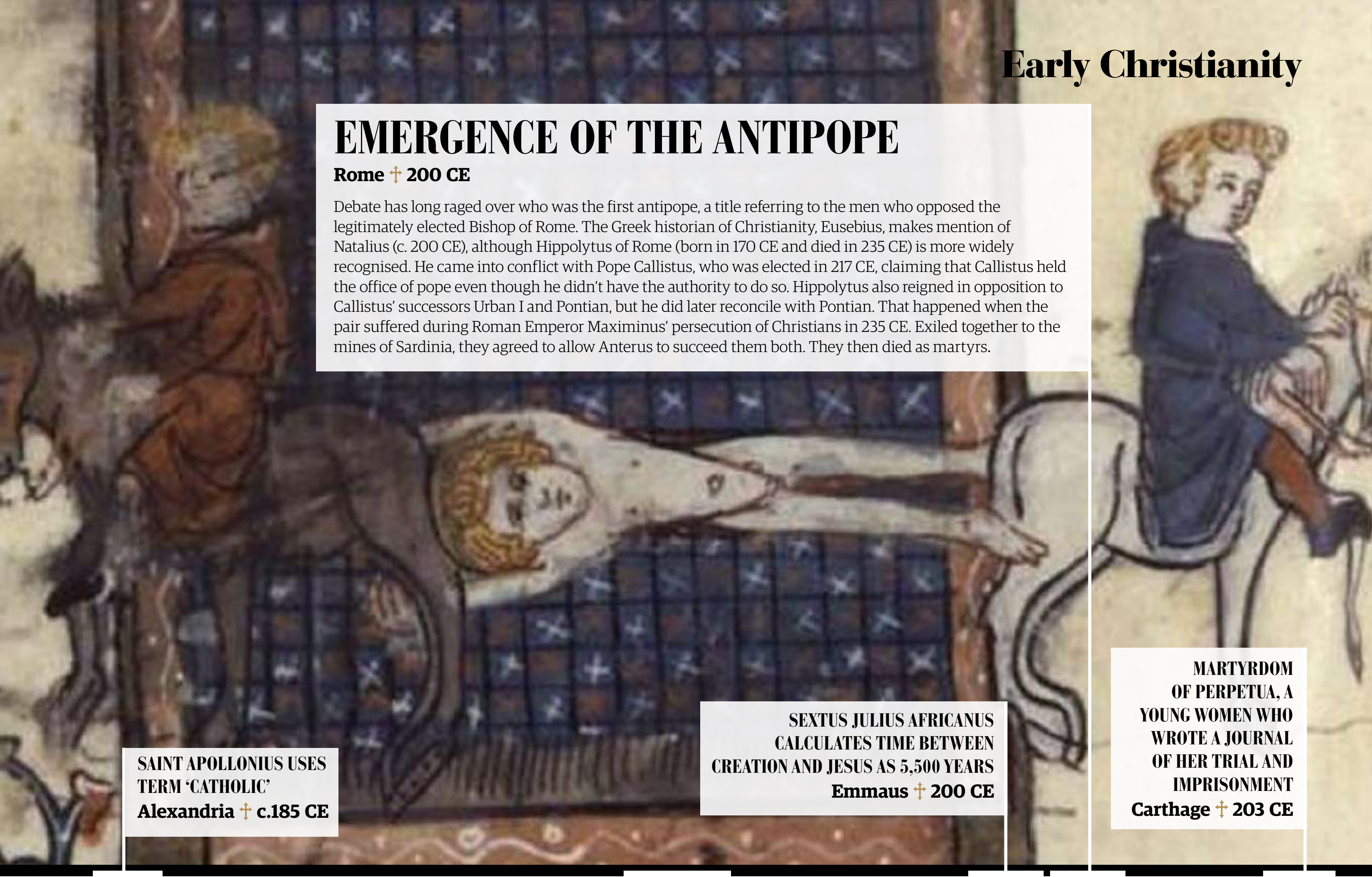
MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP TELLS OF CHRISTIAN PERSECUTIONS

Rome † 160 CE

A WIDENING RELIGIOUS GAP

Rome † 144 CE

When Gentile shipping magnate Marcion of Sinope visited Rome, he proposed a new Bible that cut away anything that had happened prior to Jesus Christ. He rejected the deity described in the Hebrew Scriptures in his proposals to the Bishop of Rome and said Jesus was only Jewish due to an accident of birth. By rejecting some books of the New Testament, casting aside the Old Testament entirely and believing the Hebrew God to be of lower status than the New Testament God, he ended up forming his own church of Marcionism. Claiming that only Paul had taught the truth, it lasted until around the 5th century.



EMERGENCE OF THE ANTIPOPE

Rome ✝ 200 CE

Debate has long raged over who was the first antipope, a title referring to the men who opposed the legitimately elected Bishop of Rome. The Greek historian of Christianity, Eusebius, makes mention of Natalius (c. 200 CE), although Hippolytus of Rome (born in 170 CE and died in 235 CE) is more widely recognised. He came into conflict with Pope Callistus, who was elected in 217 CE, claiming that Callistus held the office of pope even though he didn't have the authority to do so. Hippolytus also reigned in opposition to Callistus' successors Urban I and Pontian, but he did later reconcile with Pontian. That happened when the pair suffered during Roman Emperor Maximinus' persecution of Christians in 235 CE. Exiled together to the mines of Sardinia, they agreed to allow Anterus to succeed them both. They then died as martyrs.

SAINT APOLLONIUS USES TERM 'CATHOLIC'
Alexandria ✝ c.185 CE

SEXTUS JULIUS AFRICANUS CALCULATES TIME BETWEEN CREATION AND JESUS AS 5,500 YEARS
Emmaus ✝ 200 CE

MARTYRDOM OF PERPETUA, A YOUNG WOMEN WHO WROTE A JOURNAL OF HER TRIAL AND IMPRISONMENT
Carthage ✝ 203 CE

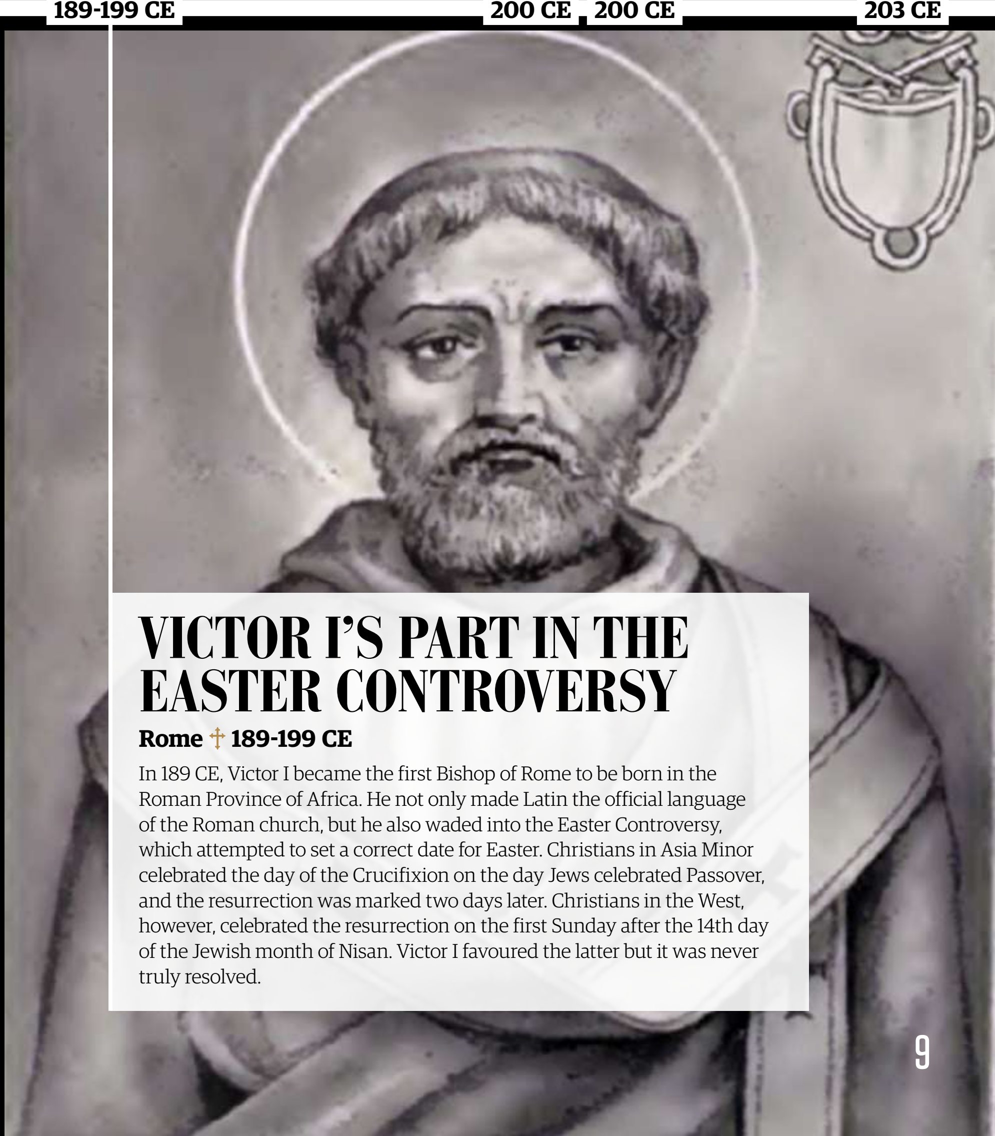
185 CE

189-199 CE

200 CE

200 CE

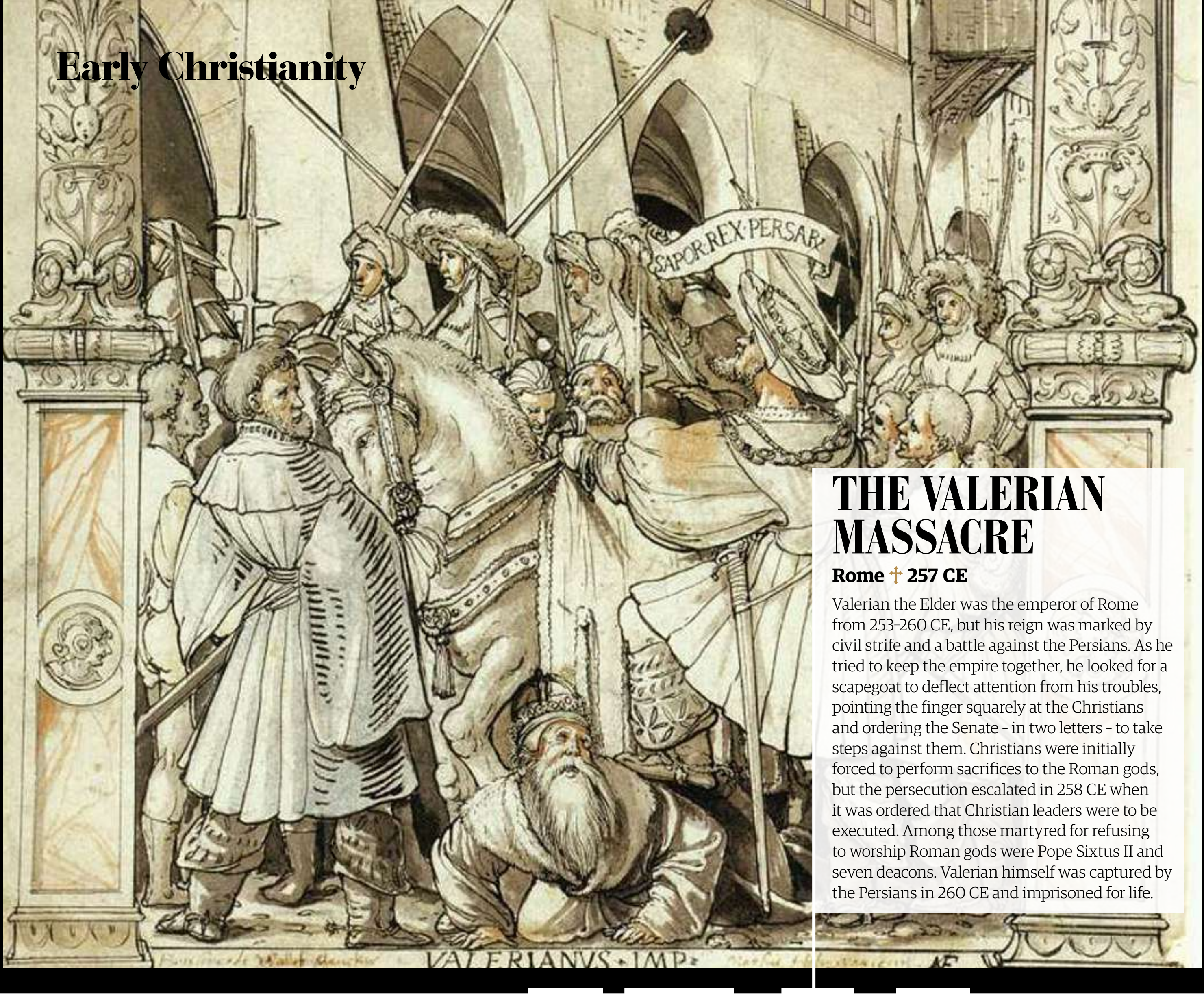
203 CE



VICTOR I'S PART IN THE EASTER CONTROVERSY

Rome ✝ 189-199 CE

In 189 CE, Victor I became the first Bishop of Rome to be born in the Roman Province of Africa. He not only made Latin the official language of the Roman church, but he also waded into the Easter Controversy, which attempted to set a correct date for Easter. Christians in Asia Minor celebrated the day of the Crucifixion on the day Jews celebrated Passover, and the resurrection was marked two days later. Christians in the West, however, celebrated the resurrection on the first Sunday after the 14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan. Victor I favoured the latter but it was never truly resolved.

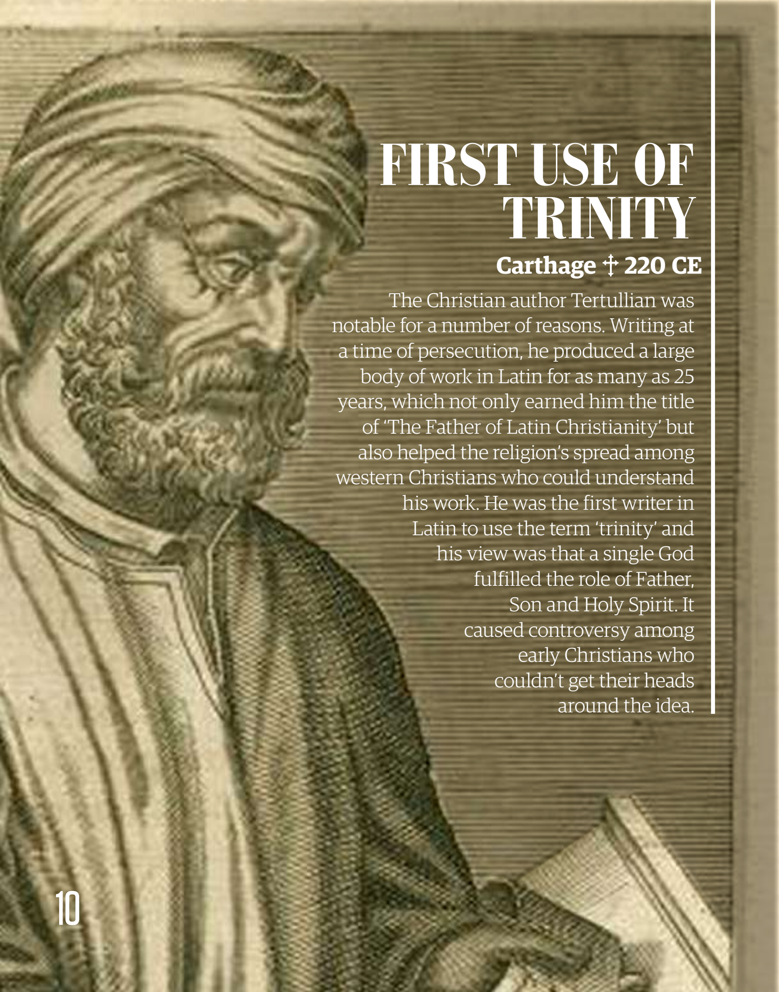


THE VALERIAN MASSACRE

Rome † 257 CE

Valerian the Elder was the emperor of Rome from 253-260 CE, but his reign was marked by civil strife and a battle against the Persians. As he tried to keep the empire together, he looked for a scapegoat to deflect attention from his troubles, pointing the finger squarely at the Christians and ordering the Senate – in two letters – to take steps against them. Christians were initially forced to perform sacrifices to the Roman gods, but the persecution escalated in 258 CE when it was ordered that Christian leaders were to be executed. Among those martyred for refusing to worship Roman gods were Pope Sixtus II and seven deacons. Valerian himself was captured by the Persians in 260 CE and imprisoned for life.

220 CE **249-251 CE** **257 CE** **259 CE**



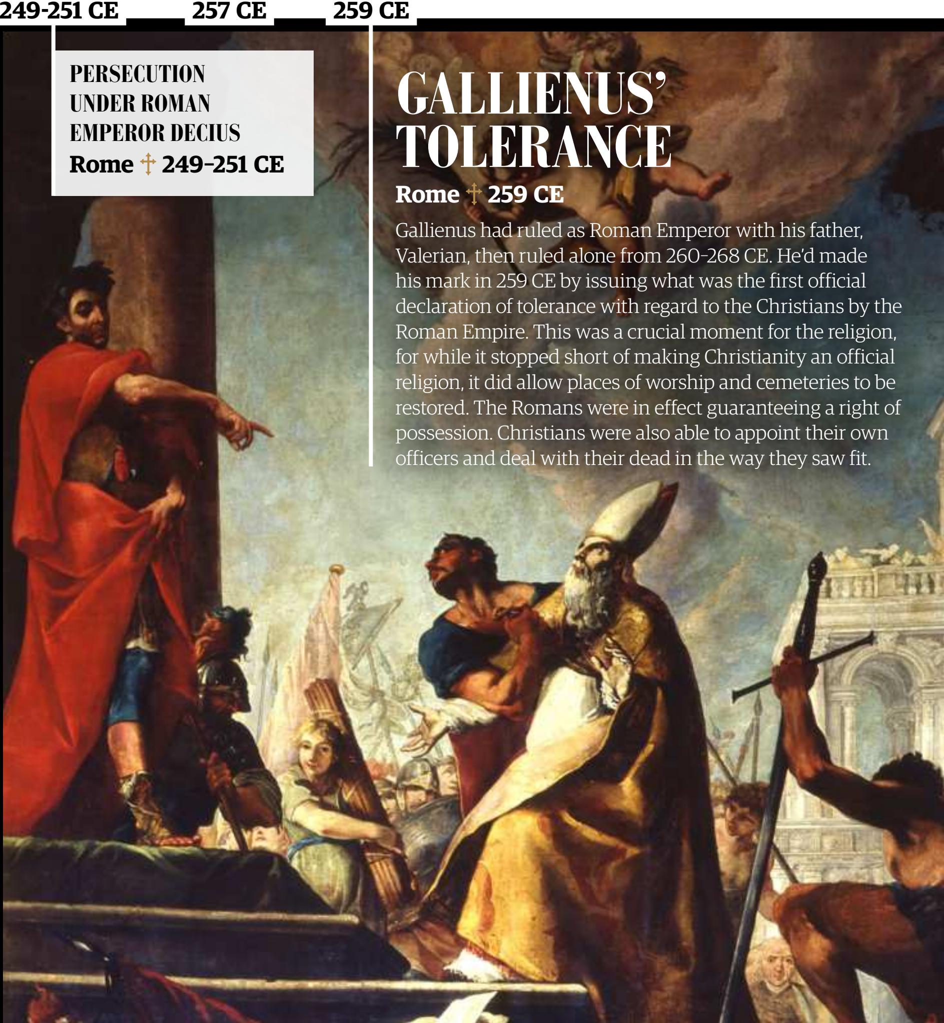
FIRST USE OF TRINITY

Carthage † 220 CE

The Christian author Tertullian was notable for a number of reasons. Writing at a time of persecution, he produced a large body of work in Latin for as many as 25 years, which not only earned him the title of 'The Father of Latin Christianity' but also helped the religion's spread among western Christians who could understand his work. He was the first writer in Latin to use the term 'trinity' and his view was that a single God fulfilled the role of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It caused controversy among early Christians who couldn't get their heads around the idea.

PERSECUTION UNDER ROMAN EMPEROR DECIUS

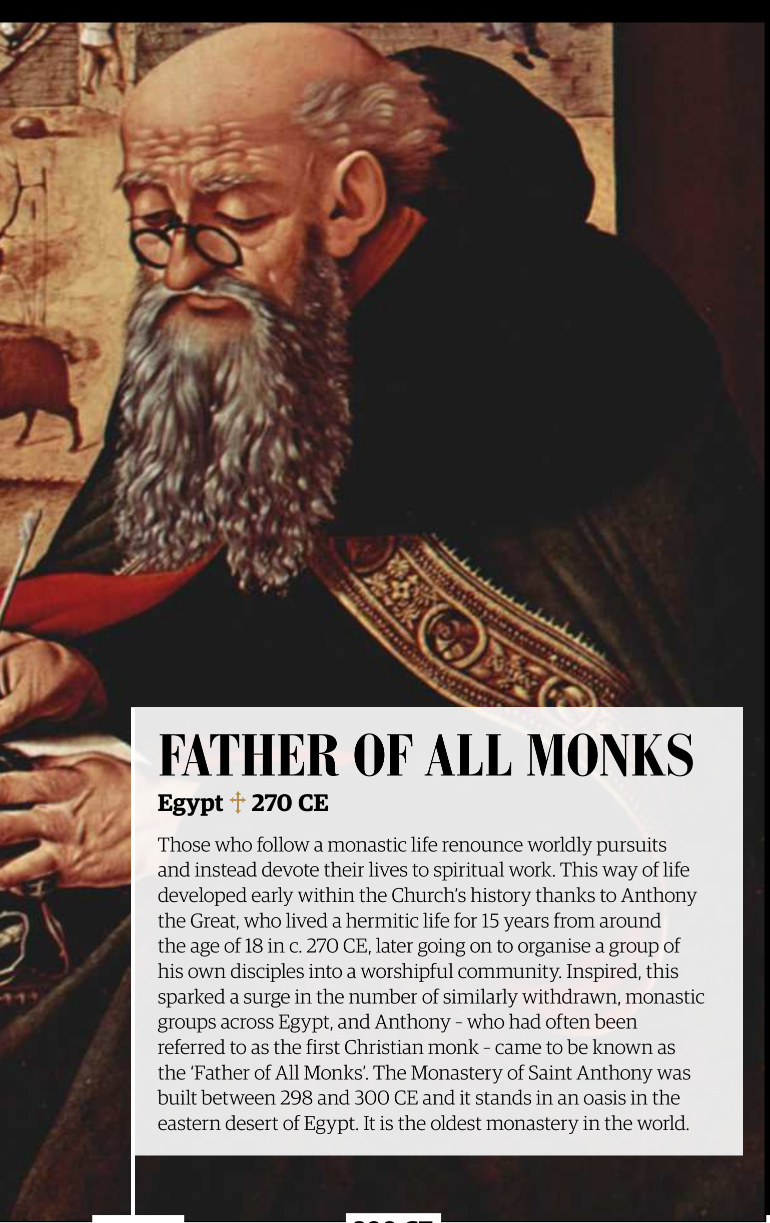
Rome † 249–251 CE



GALLIENUS' TOLERANCE

Rome † 259 CE

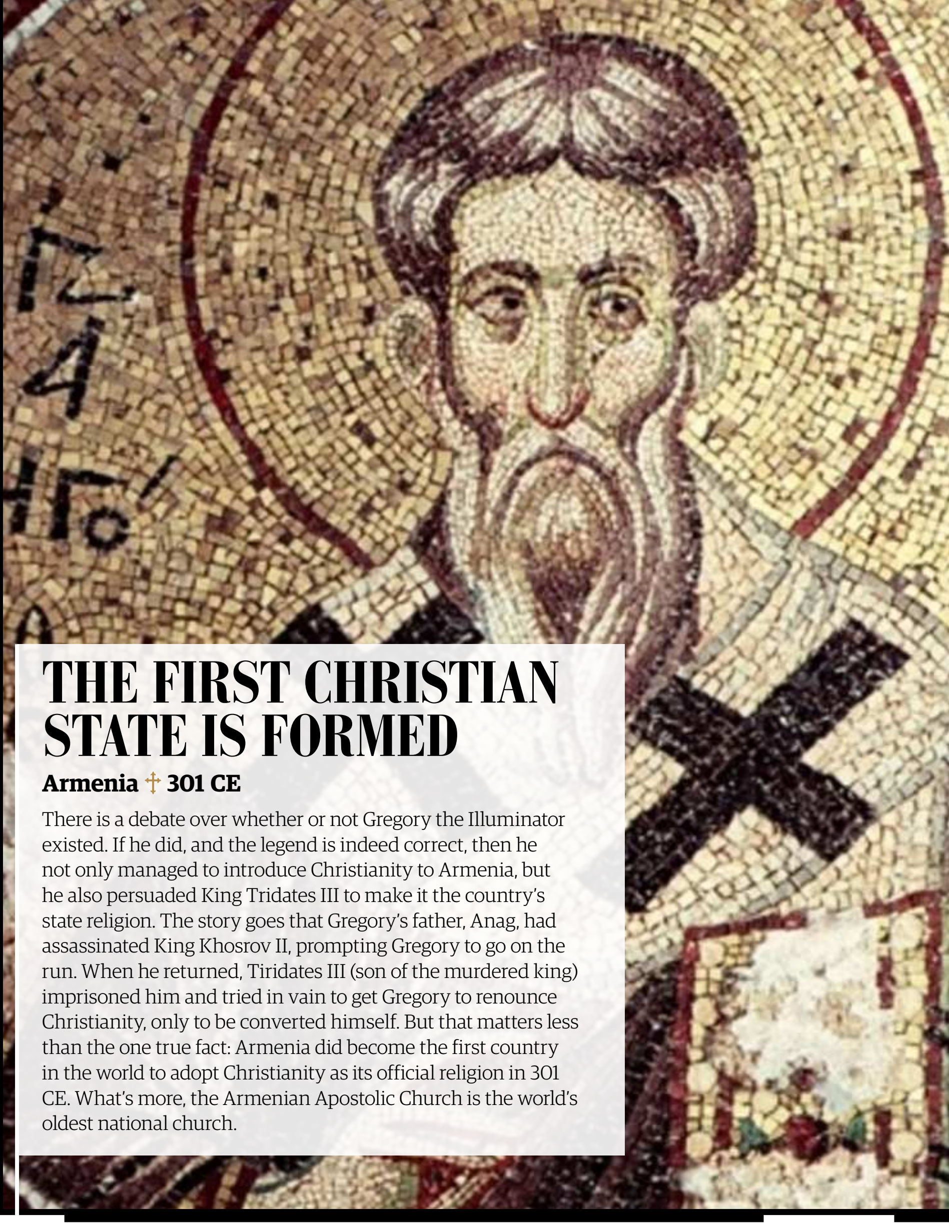
Gallienus had ruled as Roman Emperor with his father, Valerian, then ruled alone from 260-268 CE. He'd made his mark in 259 CE by issuing what was the first official declaration of tolerance with regard to the Christians by the Roman Empire. This was a crucial moment for the religion, for while it stopped short of making Christianity an official religion, it did allow places of worship and cemeteries to be restored. The Romans were in effect guaranteeing a right of possession. Christians were also able to appoint their own officers and deal with their dead in the way they saw fit.



FATHER OF ALL MONKS

Egypt † 270 CE

Those who follow a monastic life renounce worldly pursuits and instead devote their lives to spiritual work. This way of life developed early within the Church's history thanks to Anthony the Great, who lived a hermitic life for 15 years from around the age of 18 in c. 270 CE, later going on to organise a group of his own disciples into a worshipful community. Inspired, this sparked a surge in the number of similarly withdrawn, monastic groups across Egypt, and Anthony – who had often been referred to as the first Christian monk – came to be known as the 'Father of All Monks'. The Monastery of Saint Anthony was built between 298 and 300 CE and it stands in an oasis in the eastern desert of Egypt. It is the oldest monastery in the world.



THE FIRST CHRISTIAN STATE IS FORMED

Armenia † 301 CE

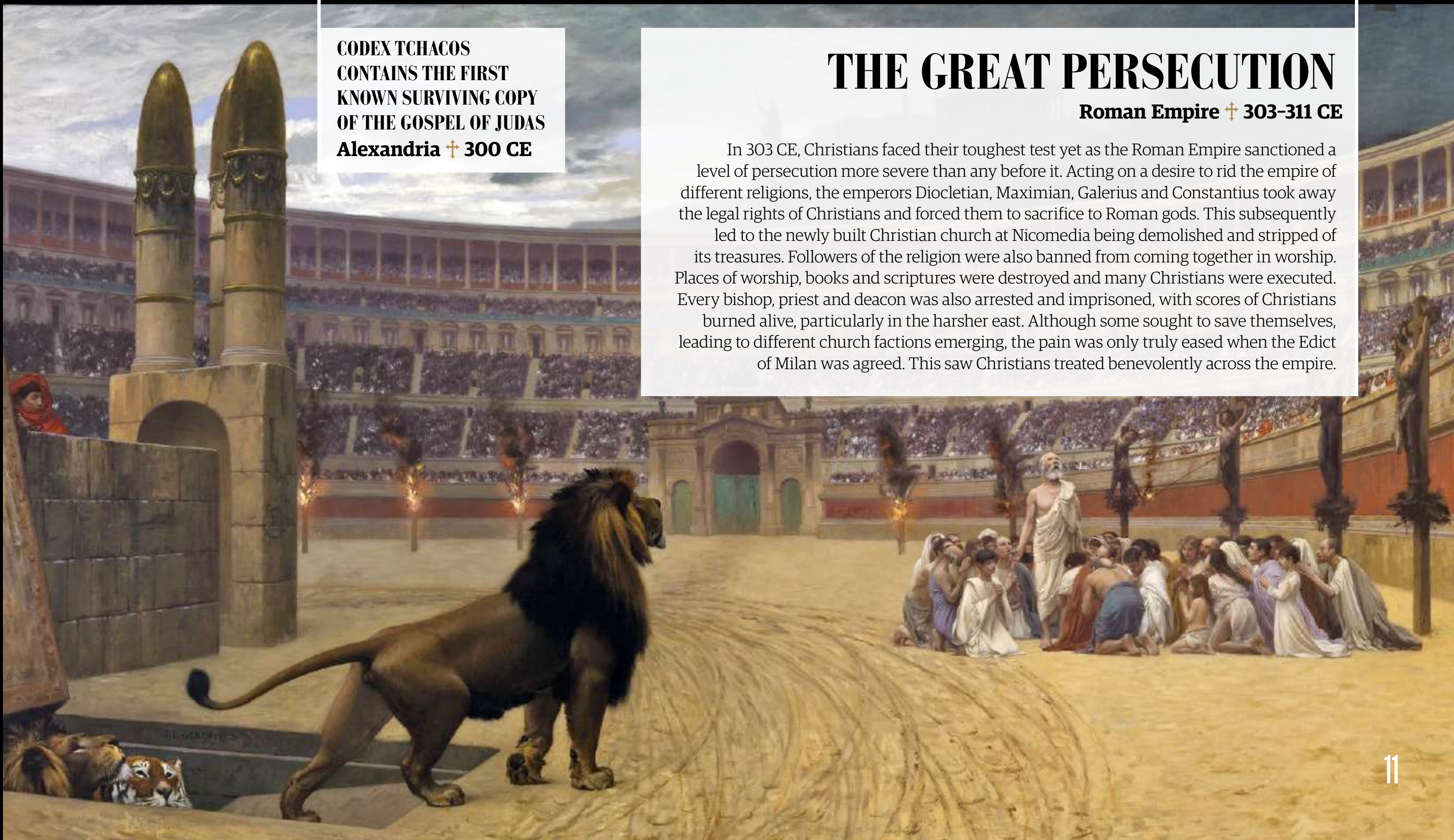
There is a debate over whether or not Gregory the Illuminator existed. If he did, and the legend is indeed correct, then he not only managed to introduce Christianity to Armenia, but he also persuaded King Tridates III to make it the country's state religion. The story goes that Gregory's father, Anag, had assassinated King Khosrov II, prompting Gregory to go on the run. When he returned, Tiridates III (son of the murdered king) imprisoned him and tried in vain to get Gregory to renounce Christianity, only to be converted himself. But that matters less than the one true fact: Armenia did become the first country in the world to adopt Christianity as its official religion in 301 CE. What's more, the Armenian Apostolic Church is the world's oldest national church.

270 CE

300 CE

301 CE

303-311 CE



CODEX TCHACOS CONTAINS THE FIRST KNOWN SURVIVING COPY OF THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS

Alexandria † 300 CE

THE GREAT PERSECUTION

Roman Empire † 303–311 CE

In 303 CE, Christians faced their toughest test yet as the Roman Empire sanctioned a level of persecution more severe than any before it. Acting on a desire to rid the empire of different religions, the emperors Diocletian, Maximian, Galerius and Constantius took away the legal rights of Christians and forced them to sacrifice to Roman gods. This subsequently led to the newly built Christian church at Nicomedia being demolished and stripped of its treasures. Followers of the religion were also banned from coming together in worship. Places of worship, books and scriptures were destroyed and many Christians were executed. Every bishop, priest and deacon was also arrested and imprisoned, with scores of Christians burned alive, particularly in the harsher east. Although some sought to save themselves, leading to different church factions emerging, the pain was only truly eased when the Edict of Milan was agreed. This saw Christians treated benevolently across the empire.

Constantine I, the Christian soldier

A brilliant soldier-emperor in an age of plague, war and civil strife, Constantine served both the Roman Empire and the Christian Church

From the death of Christ up to 312–13, the Christian religion was simultaneously oppressed and growing in the Roman Empire. In fact, the more Christians were oppressed, the more their numbers grew. They began as a tiny minority religion in the Empire, and for a long time the Romans didn't even make a distinction between them and another, rather more familiar, group of eccentric and awkward monotheists, the Jews. By 250 there were probably around a million Christians. Fifty years later, after the fiercest and most organised state persecution to date, there were more than six million Christians. After another 50 years – beginning with the Great Persecution, followed by toleration and then active sympathy and support – there were almost 34 million. It was a long, hard road, and if it ended well, that owed much to the first Christian emperor, Constantine I, also know as Constantine the Great.

Constantine was born in Naissus, a military settlement about 65 miles south of Rome's Danube frontier

At first the Roman state took little interest in Christians. The early persecution was really an intra-Jewish affair, a conflict between sects sharing a common origin. After Christianity began to spread both geographically and demographically under the impetus of St Paul's vision of converting the Gentiles, ie non-Jews, Romans began to take more notice. They still didn't quite get them, though.

Christians stood out. They talked about eating the body and blood of Christ in their rituals and called each other brother and sister, and were then accused of cannibalism and incest. They held meetings, sometimes in secret, and formed cliques. They didn't get involved in some of the public aspects of Roman life and had strange scruples about sacrificing to the gods and honouring the emperor's divine aspect. In almost every way they were ideal outsiders – and scapegoats.

The first emperor to take hostile notice of them was Nero, in 64 CE. He is generally thought to have blamed Christians for the Great Fire of Rome to distract from suspicion that it had been his doing. Christians were set alight to make 'human torches' or torn to pieces by animals. Thus began almost 250 years of endemic persecution by the Roman state.

It's almost impossible to estimate how many Christians were killed, tortured or victimised under official auspices. Most historians now agree the number of deaths was relatively small, while it is worth remembering that ordinary Roman justice was generally brutal; Christians were not singled out for unusually horrific deaths. Those who were citizens might be beheaded, while non-citizens, as was the common practice, might be killed in more spectacular ways, sometimes for public entertainment.

Nonetheless, there were other, less dramatic, penalties. Churches as well as individuals had their wealth and property confiscated, which was always a popular and lucrative way to persecute unpopular minorities. Others may simply have

© Getty

Constantine I, the Christian soldier

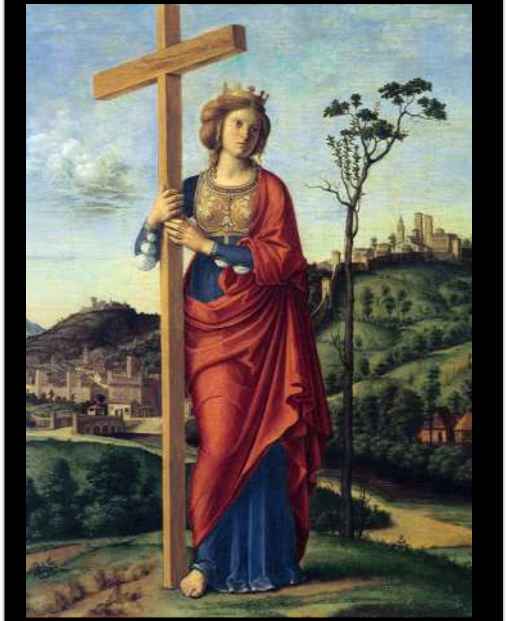
Constantine considered himself the 13th apostle and he was buried in a tomb flanked by memorials of the first 12

The saintly empress

According to some accounts, the future saint and dowager empress, Helena, was a barmaid when she met Constantius Chlorus, the young military officer she would go on to have a child with – the future emperor, Constantine. It's not exactly clear whether they were married, and Constantine's later opponents suggested that they weren't. Constantius eventually left Helena for a political marriage.

It isn't known when Helena became a Christian, but as a young woman she fit the demographic for conversion well. This was also around the time of one of the epidemics that swept through the 3rd century Empire, this time claiming an emperor, Claudius II Gothicus. Helena would have witnessed the horror, and perhaps also the notable fortitude and mutual assistance of the Christians, and it isn't unthinkable that this moved her towards the faith. It may also be that it was her influence that first nudged her son, the future emperor, towards Christianity.

As emperor, Constantine treated his mother with great honour and gave her the title of dowager empress, but it was she who earned the title of saint. She made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, building numerous churches and, according to legend, finding the cross that Christ was crucified on.



A late medieval representation of Helena. She attracted great veneration – and many legends

been denied employment or passed over for promotion. Christians serving in the army or in the civilian government would always know that they could suddenly be asked to do something they must refuse on religious grounds, with possibly fatal consequences. There are strong parallels with later anti-Jewish pogroms. Indeed, you can make a direct comparison between the way Christians were sometimes 'tested' by being made to sacrifice to the old gods or the emperor, and the way Jews were sometimes 'invited' to eat pork under the Spanish Inquisition. There was little security for Christians before Constantine, even in peaceful times.

There was also little consistency. Not only did persecution ebb and flow over time; it varied from province to province, from governor to governor, and from official to official. Further, there was no group to hunt out Christians, and so uncovering them would usually require local cooperation and informers. These would not always be equally forthcoming. In some areas and under some local regimes, Christians might feel relatively secure – or in constant danger.

Being a Christian wasn't all about insecurity, however. In fact, there could be distinct benefits. First, there was mutual support, whether financial, practical or even emotional. Christians were supposed to look out for each other. Nowhere was this more apparent than during the pandemics of the 3rd century – now thought to have been smallpox or measles – that killed huge numbers in the Empire. Christians were much more likely to nurse one another (sometimes including pagans), increasing their chances of survival. This also earned admiration and new converts.

Those converts were disproportionately likely to be female – Constantine's mother may have been an early one – and urban. Historically, women are more likely to welcome new spiritual movements, and rural areas also tend to be more conservative, so this is hardly surprising. Also, Christianity offered a measure of at least theoretical equality to women, slaves and other groups with limited status and rights under Roman customs and law. This feeling of equality, sorority and fraternity, symbolised by congregations calling one another 'brother' and 'sister', must have been powerful.

In the meantime, a structure and a hierarchy was emerging. The church was becoming established and ever more organised; it could not easily be extinguished. Bishops were widely acknowledged, and some bishops possessed greater authority than others and could offer wider direction to the church, which was still sprawling but localised, with divergent practises and, in some cases, beliefs. This would provide a framework as well as people for Constantine to work with when the time came, but also foreshadowed the problems he would help face – schism and heresy. But first the Great Persecution.

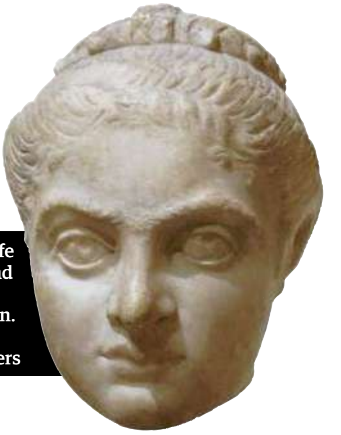
Endemic official and systematic persecution began in 250 under the emperor Decius. This was a time of great crisis for the Empire, which was

> Constantine was a superb soldier, chalking up striking victories against both Roman and non-Roman opponents

Defining moment

Battle of the Milvian Bridge 312

Fought on the banks of Rome's Tiber river in the vicinity of a crucial crossing point, this battle gave Constantine ascendancy in the Western Empire. After the retirement of the preeminent emperor, Diocletian, various 'Augusti' and 'Caesars' jostled for power, only to be picked off one by one until just Constantine was left. In a bold move, Constantine marched south through Italy with numerically inferior forces to defeat his rival, Maxentius, who was based in Rome. Having already achieved notable victories en route, this was decisive, leaving Constantine to share power with Licinius in the east – for the moment, at least.



Bust of Fausta, wife of Constantine, and daughter of the emperor Maximian. She was killed on Constantine's orders

Timeline

306

Hail Caesar – or Augustus?
When Constantine's father, Constantius, died in York, his soldiers quickly acclaimed him as augustus, or emperor. He actually only became a caesar (junior) and it was to be a few years before that changed.

313

Religious tolerance is proclaimed
At a meeting in Milan the augusti of the east and west, Constantine and Licinius, agreed on religious toleration, especially for Christians. This became known as the Edict of Milan.

313

Above the law?
Compulsory state service was an important part of the late imperial working, and it could be costly and onerous. When Christian clergy were made exempt this was a valuable privilege.

321

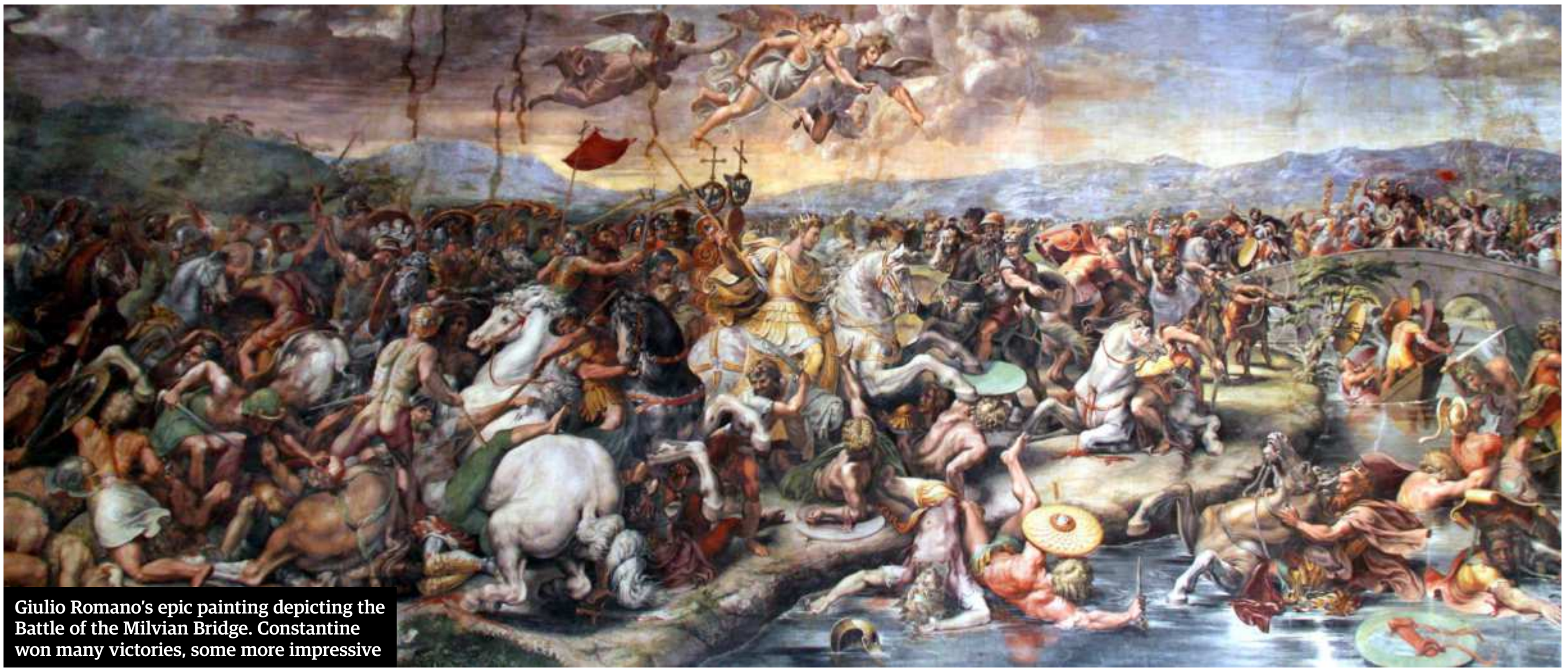
Rest for the righteous
Constantine decreed Sunday as a day of rest for most people in the Empire, except where a trade absolutely required Sunday working, e.g. agriculture.

323

Causing theological problems
Strange as it may seem now, Arius' erudite theology, influenced by Greek philosophy, was widely read and poetic verses from his greatest work (*Thalia*, 'Banquet') were made into popular songs.

324

Battle of Chrysopolis
Having reigned in tandem for more than a decade, with occasional fallings out, Constantine and Licinius finally fought a conclusive military campaign, with Constantine triumphing at Chrysopolis and becoming sole emperor.



Giulio Romano's epic painting depicting the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. Constantine won many victories, some more impressive

beset by invasion, disease, civil war and runaway inflation. Dozens of ephemeral 'emperors' fought one another for the chance of a short and often very limited reign, while up to 30 per cent of the Empire's population was lost to disease. Scapegoats were sought and found. It was said that Rome's misfortunes were brought about by those who wouldn't sacrifice to her gods, or who brought alien rites and practices into the Empire. This included, but wasn't exclusive to, Christians.

The extent and violence of persecution still varied between provinces, emperors and conditions, until finally the emperor Diocletian, who had at last brought order to imperial chaos, initiated the Great Persecution, which lasted from 303 until 313. In essence, Christians were to make an obligatory sacrifice to the traditional gods, with varying consequences if they did not, including death. The clergy were to be arrested. It was a terrible time for many of the faith, and left a lasting mark upon their collective memory. Some earned lasting fame as willing martyrs for their cause. Others were more pragmatic and lived to practise their faith another day.

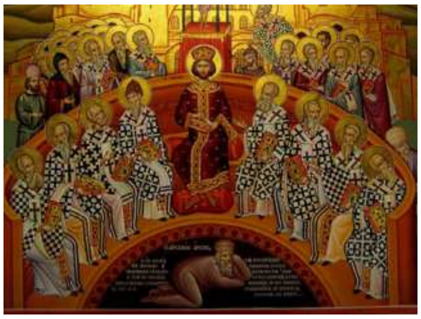
> "Christianity's greatest… sponsor was the trusted soldier of its greatest persecutor"

Diocletian had earlier brought stability by dividing the Empire between two senior emperors ('augusti') and two junior emperors ('caesars'). One augustus/caesar team would rule in the east, and one in the west. Constantine's father, Constantius Chlorus, was the western Caesar from 293 to 306, while Constantine was in the east with Diocletian's, becoming part of his inner retinue. Thus, Christianity's greatest imperial sponsor was the trusted soldier of its greatest persecutor.

Defining moment

Council of Nicaea 325

Even though Constantine had not yet been baptised, he summoned what was to be the first Christian ecumenical council. The main aim was to resolve the debate over the nature of Christ provoked by the doctrine of Arius. Arius thought that Christ was a created being, created by and subordinate to God, while others contended that Christ was of God and equal. It could be summarised as a decision between the Greek words homoousios ('of one substance') and homoiousios ('of similar substance'). The former was chosen, although not unanimously. This and the other doctrines agreed on formed the Nicene Creed, still the foundation of orthodox Christianity.



Defining moment

Baptism at last 337

Baptism was considered to be of enormous significance in early Christianity. Perhaps for this reason, Constantine delayed his baptism until shortly before his death in May 337. It may also have been because he had hoped to be baptised in the Jordan River, with opportunity never arising. Some have suggested that he was influenced by the thought that his sins would be wiped away by baptism, and as an emperor he had many sins on his conscience, with the constant imperative to add more.

326

A mysterious double death
In an episode that has never been definitively explained – despite much gossip and speculation – Constantine had his eldest son, Crispus, executed and Crispus' stepmother, Fausta, murdered. It is assumed that these deaths were linked.

330

Dedication of the new Rome
Having renamed the city of Byzantium after himself and had it greatly enlarged and improved, Constantine officially dedicated Constantinople. It was to become the capital of the empire of Byzantium, which would last until 1453.

336

Death to the heretic
Having been exiled, recalled, declared a heretic, rehabilitated, and being variously supported and denigrated by those on high, Arius died in Constantinople. It is possible he was poisoned by rivals.

337

Death followed by discord
Unusually for a Roman emperor, Constantine died a peaceful natural death. In Rome there were riots when they learned he would not be buried there. In the following years Constantine's sons would contend to become sole emperor.

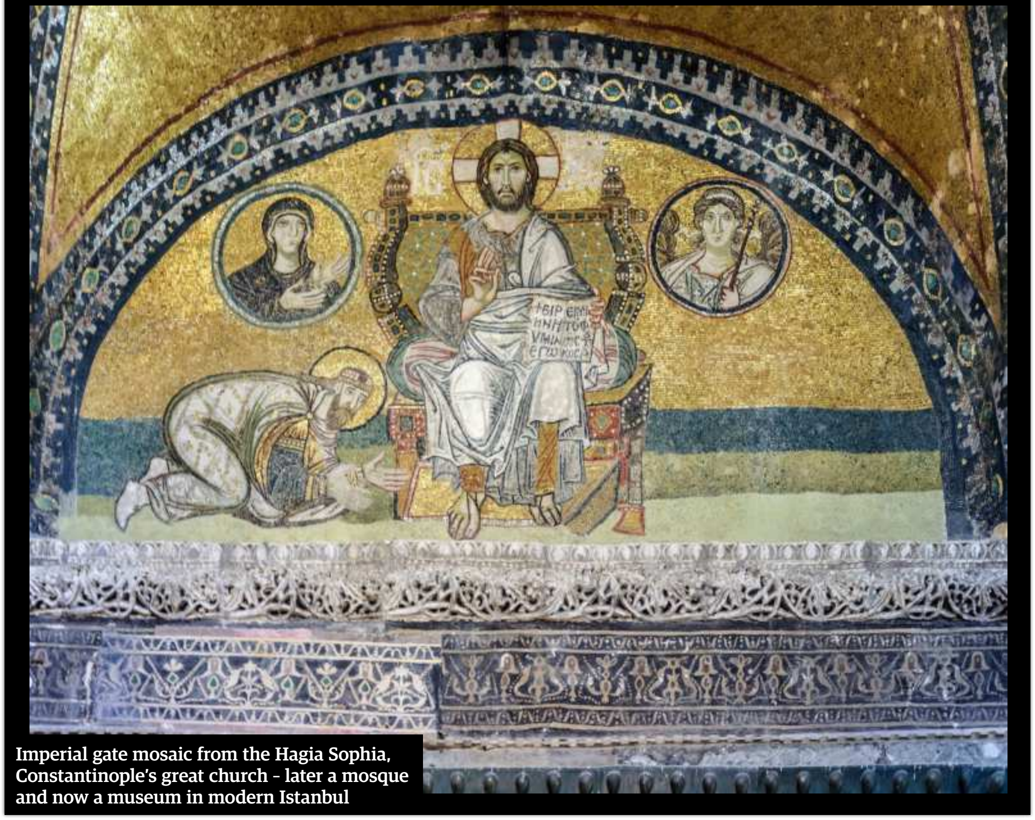
Byzantium, City of God?

It's often said that Constantine decided to supersede pagan Rome by building a new, exclusively Christian city, Constantinople. Named after him, it would glorify both the emperor and his god. It is often considered to have been a revolutionary move, shifting the Empire's centre of gravity away from Rome.

As is so often the case with Constantine, the truth is more complex, and his 'revolutionary' act was to some extent a logical development of earlier practice, or at least in keeping with it.

It had already been many years since Rome had been the political capital of the Empire. During the 'fighting' 3rd century, many soldier-emperors were mobile, and the imperial court would be their entourage and their army, following them wherever they would go. Diocletian, in some ways Constantine's mentor, had major administrative centres at Antioch, Mediolanum, Nicomedia and Trier. These cities were closer to the frontiers, reflecting the military priorities of the time. Rome was large and rich, and its name was still full of glamour, even if the reality was often squalid, but it was far from the action.

Building a 'second Rome' and using it as a new capital was certainly notable, but it was not quite the dramatic departure of legend. Constantinople, built on the site of the ancient Greek city of Byzantium, was handily placed. There were also pagan structures in the city; it was not yet exclusively Christian. Nonetheless, it was to become the capital of arguably the most Christian state to have existed, the Byzantine Empire, and one of the world's great cities.



Imperial gate mosaic from the Hagia Sophia, Constantinople's great church – later a mosque and now a museum in modern Istanbul

DNCRISPVSNOBILISSCAES

Crispus, Constantine's eldest son from his first marriage to Minervina, made it onto coins before Constantine's deadly disfavour claimed him

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem. Helena was said have discovered the 'True Cross' in the foundations

We can't be sure what Constantine's attitude was to Diocletian's anti-Christian campaign at the time, but that is only fitting for the man who may be the most enigmatic great figure of the Roman world. We do know that he was already becoming the courageous, ambitious and successful military officer who was to fight his way to become the first sole and undisputed emperor for a very long time, defeating every rival caesar and augustus.

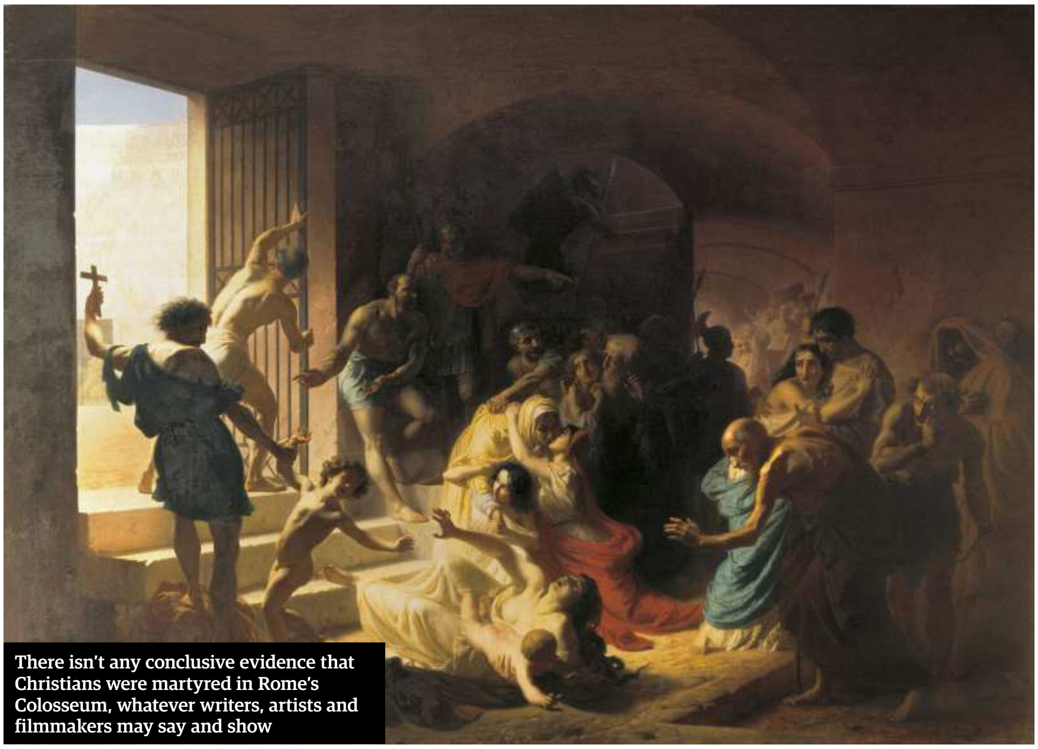
There aren't just many mysteries about Constantine, there are also many misunderstandings. He didn't immediately become the emperor in 312, he became an emperor, one of two. He and his eastern colleague, Licinius, formed a partnership that lasted until 324, when Constantine defeated him in battle. And nor did he exactly convert to Christianity at that time; his conversion was more of an ongoing process. He was not to be baptised until towards the end of his life. Finally, he didn't so much 'legalise' Christianity in 313 with the so-called Edict of Milan, as proclaim a general policy of religious toleration with Licinius at that time, with a specific emphasis on Christianity. It was, however, the end of persecution for Roman Christians and, with the exception of the reign of Julian the Apostate (emperor 361–63), the beginning of an unbroken period of official support, with Theodosius I making Christianity the state religion in 380.

Many have questioned the sincerity of Constantine's conversion. Earlier in his career he had proclaimed a special relationship with a series of gods, most recently Sol Invictus. At times he also seemed overly concerned with what his god could do (and had done – victory in war) for him, rather than what he could do for his god. Not all of his actions as emperor were altogether Christian, especially having his wife, Fausta, and his eldest son, Crispus, killed – the former through suffocation in an overheated bath.

It is fair to say that Constantine valued the victories that the Christian god, the 'highest god', had brought him, and in this he was a traditional Roman soldier and emperor. He also seemed to ease from paganism towards professing full Christianity rather than, as later stories suggested, being immediately converted through visions and dreams. Nor did he seem entirely well informed about the religion at first. He behaved like a ruthless Roman emperor at times, although in the case of Fausta and Crispus there may have been extenuating circumstances. None of these things disqualify him from sincerity, though, and perhaps they're even more convincing than a conveniently neat and tidy conversion.

The fact is that Constantine became a diligent student of Christianity, involved himself deeply in church matters, attempted to maintain unity of both people and doctrine, supported the Church and clergy through the state, sponsored magnificent ecclesiastical buildings, and did much to build and shape future Christianity.

It can even be argued that Constantine's gradual and pragmatic conversion reflected that of Rome



There isn't any conclusive evidence that Christians were martyred in Rome's Colosseum, whatever writers, artists and filmmakers may say and show

Diocletian, Constantine's early imperial mentor. He initiated what became known as the Great Persecution

LICINIVS AVG OB DV FILII SVI

Licinius, Constantine's fellow emperor until 324. They both sponsored religious tolerance from 313

itself. For a time Christianity and traditional religion coexisted. There was freedom of worship. The goddess Victoria was on Constantine's triumphal arch. This did much to draw the sting from potential opposition. Forced, premature conversion, civil discord and the possibility of the Empire fracturing would not have served Christianity. Maintained intact and reasonably healthy, the Empire could act as the conduit for Christianity to spread to the widest extent.

If, given the conditions of the previous century, keeping the Empire whole seemed the most difficult of tasks, Constantine was about to find the argumentative Church quite a handful, too. It seemed under constant threat from schism and heresy.

> Although the bishop of Rome was already important, the papacy as we know it did not yet exist

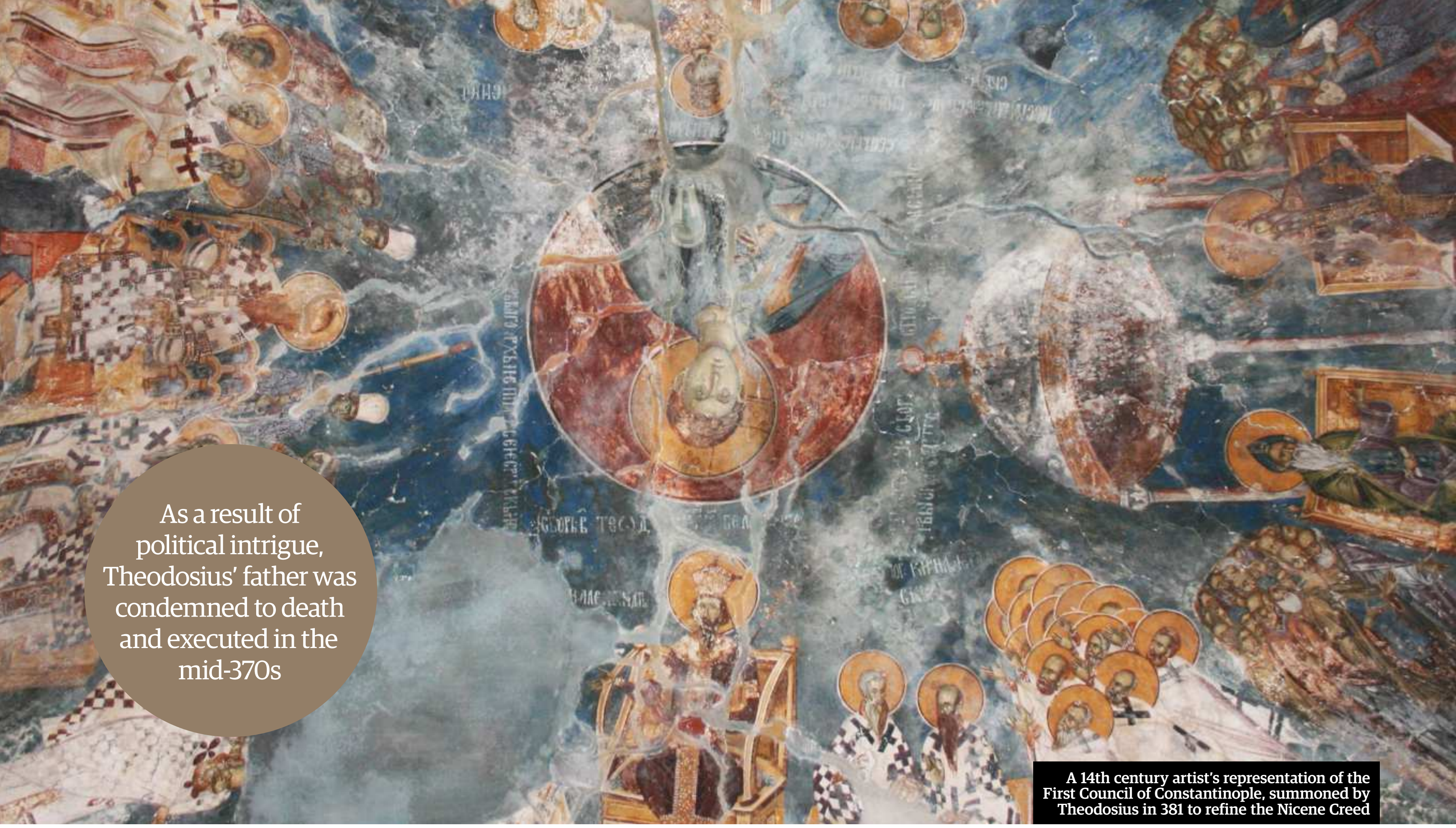
The first great challenge was the Donatist schism. The followers of Donatus believed that those Christians who had renounced Christ during the Great Persecution, or had played along with the authorities in any way, should be permanently excluded from the Church. Caecilian, elected bishop of Carthage in North Africa in 311, was felt by the Donatists to have been compromised because he had been consecrated by a bishop who had cooperated with the authorities. Constantine sent the matter to arbitration, in which Caecilian was found innocent. This matched Constantine's personal view that Christian forgiveness was called for, while he also feared that division would bring the wrath of God onto the Empire. The Donatists were unmoved and Constantine initially suppressed them, before reverting to a policy of tolerance. It was not a notably successful intervention, and the Donatists continued to cause trouble into the 7th century, but perhaps it was the best that could be hoped for. The split had at least been contained.

Constantine's second major intervention in church affairs was more successful in the long run, though just as ambivalent at the time – and equally difficult. The Council of Nicaea, summoned by Constantine in 325, was the first Ecumenical council. It was called in response to what became known as the Arian heresy, which revolved around an obscure disagreement about the precise nature of Christ, taking in theology/philosophy and technical definitions in Greek. Constantine was impatient, regarding this as the result of too much leisure time and an overly academic approach to Christianity, and expected it to be resolved quickly and unanimously. He was set to be disappointed again; theologians are no less argumentative and subtle than philosophers.

Nonetheless, the Nicene Creed, which emerged from the Council, became the basis of orthodox Christian belief. It condemned the doctrine of Arian and also settled many other doctrinal and ecclesiastical matters, helping to establish the Church's structure as well as its beliefs. The Arian heresy was to resurface again and again, and at some points was ascendant, but ultimately the Nicene Creed stood the test of time. Meanwhile, Constantine supported the Church's majority decision and exiled Arian. He had been instrumental in laying another foundation stone of Christianity as we know it.

In the end, it may not have been Constantine's individual achievements that preserved both the Christian faith and the Empire. His conversion, and the way he handled it politically, provided the conditions for the Church to flourish. His influence on the Church also made it more Roman – for he was in many ways a traditional Roman – while he also did much to reconcile male and military Rome with Christianity. Military service became more acceptable to Christians, while Christianity became acceptable in the army. The faith remained predominantly urban, but it was spreading.

Parallel to this, Constantine bound church and state, both through his own benign interference, and through offering state support. He didn't attempt to make the Church supreme, and his policies towards pagans were mild at first. He provided the conditions in which Christianity could flourish, while at the same time keeping the Empire in one piece. This was his ultimate legacy: he both established the Christian Church *and* kept the Empire strong and unified – two seemingly irreconcilable objectives – at the same time.



A 14th century artist's representation of the First Council of Constantinople, summoned by Theodosius in 381 to refine the Nicene Creed

As a result of political intrigue, Theodosius' father was condemned to death and executed in the mid-370s

Rome becomes a Christian state

Constantine I was the first Christian emperor of Rome, but Theodosius I was the first emperor of Christian Rome

In 380 CE the Roman emperor Theodosius I - eventually, like Constantine I, known as 'the Great' - issued a decree which made Christianity the official religion within the Empire. More specifically, he made the Nicene Creed, as promulgated at the Council of Nicaea in 325, mandatory. Not only was paganism to be suppressed; so were heretical forms of Christianity.

It would be easy to see Theodosius as the opposite of Constantine, whose reign began with the Edict of Milan, which established religious tolerance, and who generally allowed free religious practice. It can also be seen as a completion of the circle, with Christians going from being persecuted to becoming persecutors. It might also be thought that Theodosius was a bigot, or perhaps a scholarly emperor with eyes for nothing but his religion.

In fact, Theodosius was in many ways similar to Constantine, not least in that he was a tough soldier. Neither had an advanced education. In some ways Theodosius was completing what Constantine started. Above all, he was reacting to circumstances as they arose. Theodosius was not a simple black-and-white figure and his world was difficult, hostile and ever-changing. His actions should be seen in this context.

By 380 Theodosius was an old campaigner, who had served with his general father in Britain, Gaul and the Balkans. It's likely that his parents and possibly grandparents were Christians, and so he probably grew up in the faith. Nonetheless, he does not seem to have been notably pious in his youth, and he was only baptised after a serious illness in 380. It's easy to see how a new sickbed-prompted zeal for Christianity might have influenced his decision to establish it as the state religion, but that can only be speculation. As it was, he didn't even discuss his edict with the church before announcing it. Fairly or unfairly, this gives it a whiff of impulsiveness.

It also seems almost out of character. He had first attracted the interest of the emperor Gratian because of his military ability, and had been made the 'augustus' of the east after further proving himself as a soldier. He was a military man through and through. What's more, he attracted criticism for not being enough of a bigot in other areas. Theodosius was innovative and open-minded in bringing 'barbarians' from outside the Empire into the fold, and allying with them as necessary. He has even been accused of favouring the Goths. Theodosius also employed pagans in high office for a good part of his career.

Perhaps unity, the concern of many emperors, was one of Theodosius' driving motives. This would apply equally to unity within Christian ranks, if not more so. It should be emphasised that Christianity was not made the state religion – the Nicene Creed was. Theodosius was addressing doctrinal conflicts that Constantine had also attempted to fix. The parallel is even greater than that, because in 381, Theodosius summoned the second ecumenical council – the First Council of Constantinople – to refine the Nicene Creed. His great predecessor had, of course, summoned the first ecumenical council, which formulated the creed.

The possibility that Christians were a major target of Theodosius' edict gains further support from the fact that he only prohibited pagan sacrifices, the use of pagan temples, and then pagan worship as a whole in the 390s, more than a decade later. In a way, he was again following Constantine, who gradually moved away from tolerance, with some inconsistency in-between. Neither emperor was a systematic thinker with a religious or ideological programme; they were able, intelligent, practical men of affairs dealing with a wide range of situations and problems, and making the best of them they could. They had to balance out many factors in their decisions, not just create or abolish with edicts and decrees.

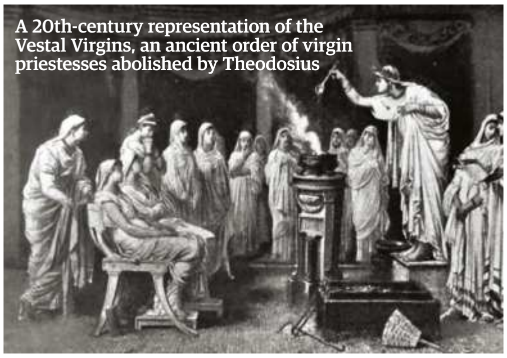
One difference for Theodosius is that he had a close relationship with someone who did have a systematic religious programme: Bishop (later Saint) Ambrose of Milan. We cannot know exactly what his influence was, but it was probably a significant factor. There was undoubtedly tension between the two men over the boundaries of the church and state, but Ambrose was persistent, highly capable and persuasive. He was also opposed to religious tolerance, even if he was often an advocate of clemency in judicial affairs.

In 392, a rogue emperor of the Western Empire was proclaimed, a pagan called Eugenius. Those who wanted to protect or restore paganism gathered around Eugenius and another civil war brewed up. Imperial pretenders and civil war were endemic in the late Empire, but this was in some ways a religious war. Such things were almost unheard of in the ancient world. When Theodosius was victorious, leading an army full of barbarians, Christians viewed it as a Christian triumph. Whether it would have been possible to maintain pagan worship, regardless of the outcome, is moot. All the momentum was with the Christians, and the logic of their beliefs was clear: there was only one God, and it would be no mercy to allow pagans to damn themselves by worshipping false gods.

Theodosius' greatest legacy may have been in an internal Christian affair. He was more vigorous than Constantine in advocating the Nicene Creed and suppressing the Arian heresy. His actions did much to establish the creed as the basis for orthodox Christianity to this day. His close but sometimes tense relationship with Ambrose of Milan also helped explore the relationship between the Christian state and church, even if this is an area that has continued to cause problems.

> The Vestal Virgins, an ancient religious order said to be essential to Rome's safety, were abolished by Theodosius

Artwork from the mid-3rd century depicting a battle against Germans. Barbarian invaders were a grave problem, but Theodosius enlisted Goths in the army


A 20th-century representation of the Vestal Virgins, an ancient order of virgin priestesses abolished by Theodosius

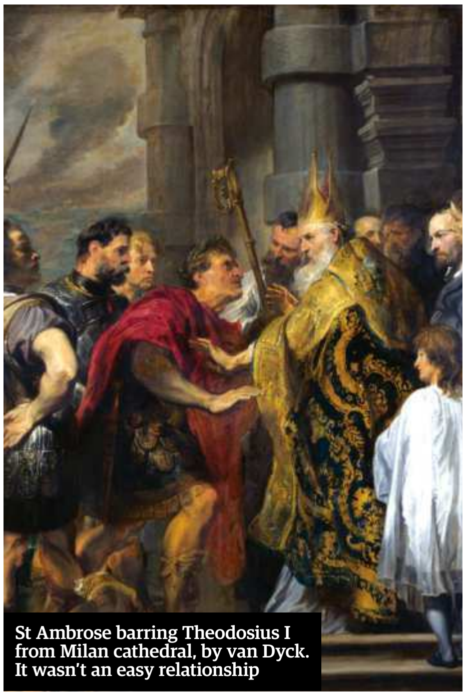
A sinful saint?

Bishop (Saint) Ambrose of Milan was one of the more fascinating characters in the late 4th century Empire. Erudite, gifted, intolerant of both paganism and social injustice, he was also politically astute, persuasive and possibly a touch Machiavellian.

Ambrose campaigned successfully against appeals from pagans for greater tolerance, and also criticised Theodosius for having punished Christian zealots who burnt down a synagogue. He was notably intolerant of Christians who followed the Arian heresy. At the same time he often pleaded for clemency on behalf of convicted criminals, while his most famous intervention was to impose a penance on Theodosius for brutal conduct.

After one of his officers was murdered in Thessalonica, Theodosius order severe reprisals and a massacre ensued. Ambrose saw to it that the emperor was condemned in a church council and, after a long pause for thought, Theodosius submitted to public penance. There's an interesting parallel to be drawn with Henry II of England, who was forced to make public penance in Canterbury in 1174 after being implicated in the murder of Thomas à Becket – except that here civilians rather than clergy were being defended.

Whether you regard Ambrose as a hero, a villain, or something of both, he was undoubtedly a strong-minded and formidable man.


St Ambrose barring Theodosius I from Milan cathedral, by van Dyck. It wasn't an easy relationship

© Getty Images

The canonisation of the Bible

The Bible is the Word of God, written by the hand of man. But who decided on the final edit?

There is no such thing as the Bible, and there never has been. Or at least not a single, definitive text that all churches agree on. The Christian holy book is an anthology of writings from apostles, disciples, prophets and scholars. Official scripture, or canon, is by definition supposed to be dictated or inspired by God. But from the very beginning of Christianity, which writings count as scriptural has depended on who you asked.

Let's start with the Old Testament. The foundation of this is the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), plus another 34 books that are together referred to as the 'protocanonical books'. These books are essentially the same as the Tanakh, or Hebrew Bible, used by Judaism. The Jewish version divides them up into 22 books instead of 39, but the text is the same. In the 3rd century BCE, these books were translated into Greek by Jewish scholars. This translation is referred to as the Septuagint, from the Latin word 'seventy' (a reference to the 72 scholars who supposedly created the translation). At the time of the Apostles, the Septuagint existed as a collection of separate scrolls. It wasn't bound into a single book until the middle of the 2nd century. All the canonical Old Testament books can be found in the Septuagint but the Septuagint also contains some books that were not part of the Hebrew Bible. These books are known as 'deuterocanonical' (second canon) and they are Tobit, Judith, the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, along with two books of the Maccabees.

Protestant Bibles don't include any of the deuterocanonical scripture and even the churches that do, disagree on their status. In the Roman Catholic tradition, deuterocanonical simply refers to the fact that these books were added to the canon after the protocanonical scripture had been agreed. But for Orthodox Christians, the deuterocanonical books have secondary authority. They are still part of the Word of God, but their message carries less weight.

> The word 'canon' comes from the Greek word meaning a 'rod' or 'ruler', against which faith is measured

Ironically, the earliest New Testament canon was heretical. It was established by Marcion of Sinope (c.85-160 CE) who was a bishop in what is now northern Turkey. He believed that the vengeful God described in the Old Testament could not be the same entity as the loving God that sent his only son Jesus Christ. His solution was to reject the entire Old Testament and all of the New Testament books except for heavily edited versions of Luke and the writings of St Paul. Since this schism occurred so early in the development of the young church, it could have sent Christianity down an entirely different path. Marcion was condemned as a heretic in 144 but his church continued to grow and rivalled the Orthodox Church for another two centuries. The Catholic Church has described

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has the longest Bible, with 45 Old Testament and 35 New Testament books

Marcionism as the greatest foe the Church has ever faced, and a desire to counter the Marcion Bible may have accelerated the need for the early Orthodox Church to define a canon of its own. In 208, the Carthaginian theologian Tertullian wrote a book attacking Marcion. As part of his arguments explaining how the Judaic scriptures were still an essential part of a Christian Bible, he came up with the idea of dividing it into the Old and New Testaments. Before this, all the books were just lumped together.

Until the Renaissance, it was quite common for popes to speak no Greek and Eastern Patriarchs to speak no Latin

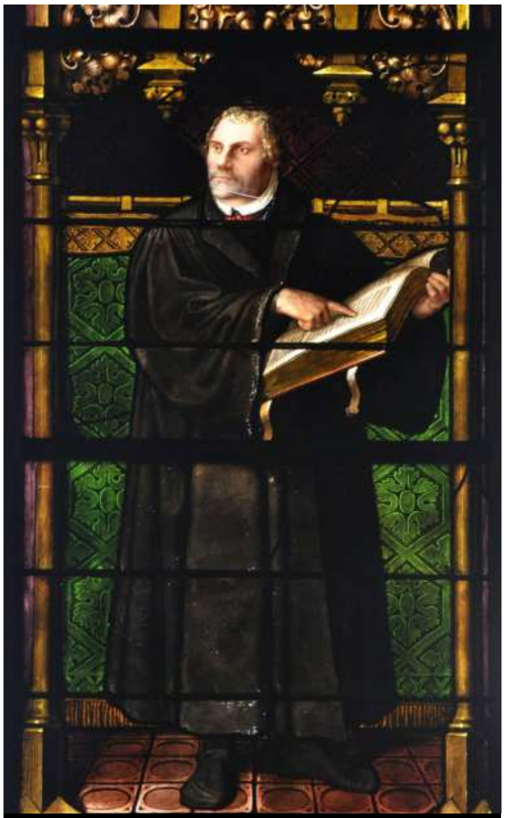
Despite Marcionism, by around 170 most of the Christian churches were in agreement about what constituted canon. In fact there was enough of a consensus that no one seems to have bothered to explicitly define it. In 313, the Roman emperor Constantine I legalised Christianity and later converted to Christianity himself. When he commissioned 50 copies of the Bible to be made for the churches of Constantinople in 331, there is no record of any discussion regarding which books should be included. Nor had canon been discussed at all, as far as we know, at the First Council of Nicea, six years before that. The Council wrestled over the nature of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ and the wording of the Christian Creed. But the composition of the Bible itself, was by that point apparently already uncontroversial.

Uncontroversial, but not settled. In 393, in the city of Hippo Regius in modern-day Algeria, a church assembly, or synod, was held to ratify the current de facto canon. We don't actually know for certain what was discussed at that synod because no records have survived. But four years later, at the third synod of Carthage, a summary of the synod of Hippo was read out. This summary includes a list of all the agreed canonical books of the Bible. That list comprises the 27 books that make up the New Testament, as currently agreed upon by all the major branches of Christianity. But it is important to realise that the synod was not making a pronouncement that gave these books canonical status. It was simply recognising the current consensus of which books were canonical, according to the current practises of all the individual churches under the bishops' care.

At the turn of the 5th century, the Italian priest and historian Saint Jerome made a new translation of the Bible into Latin. This work used older Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts, as well as the Latin translation in use at the time. Jerome changed the order that the Gospels appeared in the New Testament from Matthew, John, Luke, Mark, as they were in the old Latin translation, to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, as they appear now. Jerome had only originally been commissioned (by Pope Damasus I) to translate the Gospels, but he went on to translate the rest of the New Testament and the Septuagint as well. At least the books that he agreed with. Jerome questioned the authority of Revelation, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Epistles of Peter. When the pope insisted that he include these as well, Jerome just copied out the existing Latin translations of these books made by older scholars. This Bible became known as 'The Vulgate' (Latin for 'common') and it gradually replaced the older translation until it effectively became the official version of the Bible throughout the Middle Ages.

The Vulgate Bible was possibly the first and only time that a single canon was established. The Orthodox Church declared the Vulgate to be official doctrine in 692 at the Second Trullan Council, but none of the Roman Catholic bishops attended the council because of various doctrinal disagreements. Their objections didn't relate to Bible canon but nevertheless, the Catholic Church would not get around to formally declaring their canon for another 850 years.

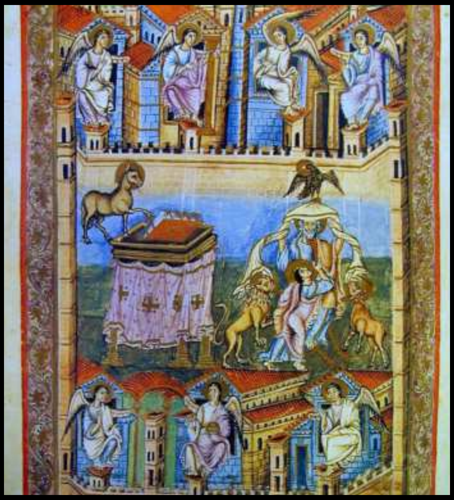
Once again, the incentive for this came from a heretic. In 1517 Martin Luther wrote the *Ninety-five Theses* criticising the sale of papal indulgences and the idea that the pope could reduce the

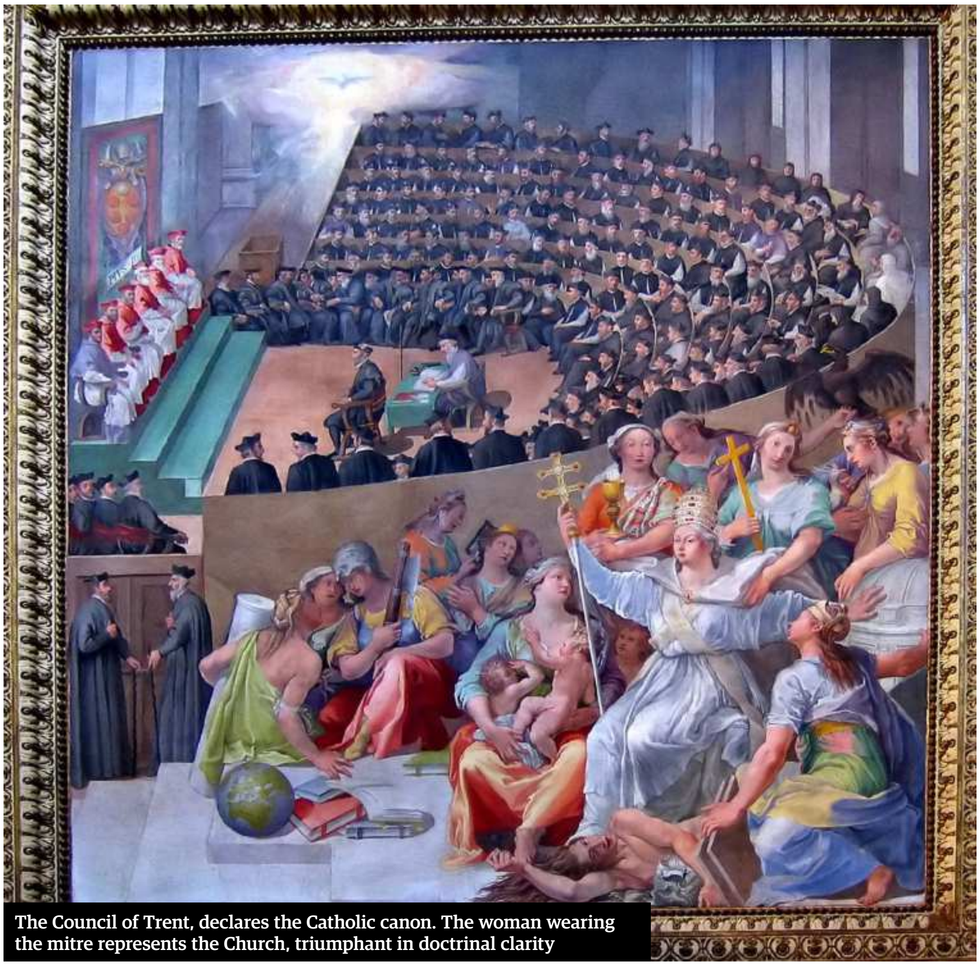

German theologian Martin Luther believed that only the oldest texts of the Bible books should be trusted

The Codex Sinaiticus is a Bible written between 330-50. Only parts of the Old Testament still survive

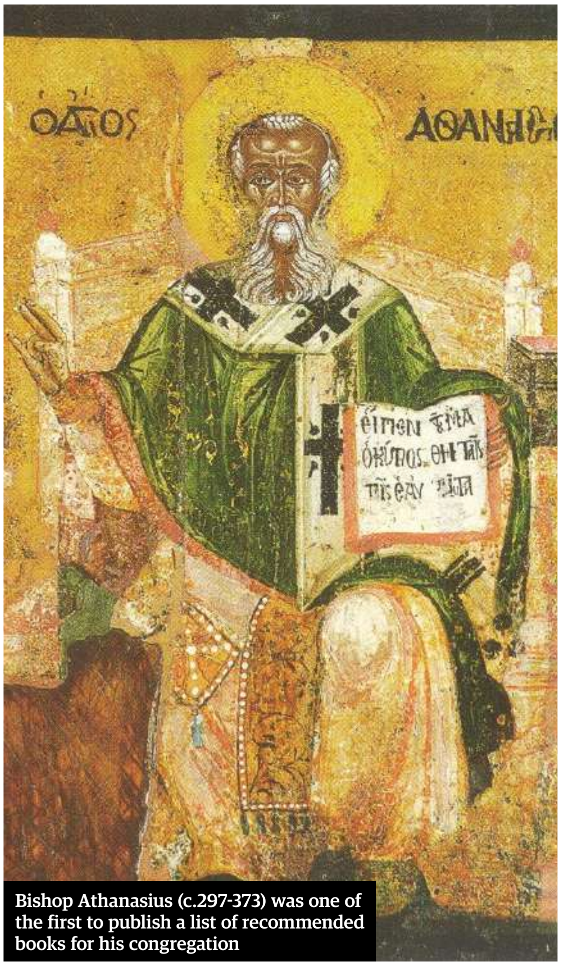
The most misunderstood book

The book of Revelation is one of the strangest in the New Testament. Its tone is much more dramatic and mystical than the other books and it was the last one to be accepted into canon. But its initial reception by the early Church Fathers was very enthusiastic. It was written by someone who calls himself John and it was originally unquestioned that this was the apostle John, son of Zebedee. In the early 3rd century, suspicions arose that it may have been a different John, or even a forgery by a heretic called Cerinthus, but the book was nevertheless affirmed by the Synod of Hippo, as well as by St Jerome and St Augustine in the 5th century. The Greek word for revelation is 'apocalypse' and the book of Revelation is often seen as prophesying the end of the world. But in fact modern Bible scholars believe that the author may have simply been describing the end of his own world. The book was written soon after Roman soldiers had quelled an armed Jewish revolt in 70 CE, leaving Jerusalem in ruins and the great temple burned to the ground. Revelation can be interpreted as an anti-Roman tract to inspire followers of Jesus during that dark time.


The mystical imagery in Revelation contains references to the Old Testament book of Ezekiel



The Council of Trent, declares the Catholic canon. The woman wearing the mitre represents the Church, triumphant in doctrinal clarity



Bishop Athanasius (c.297-373) was one of the first to publish a list of recommended books for his congregation

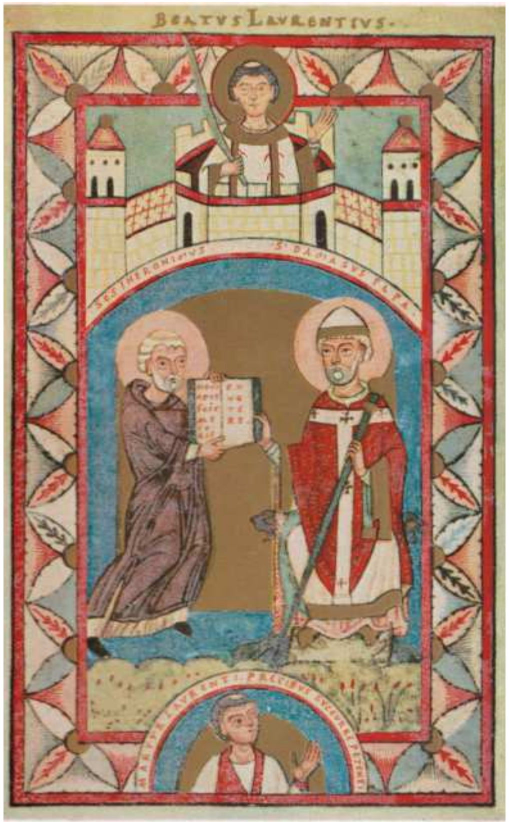
> “Luther felt the truth of the Word of God could only be found in early writings”

amount of time a person spent in purgatory. As the Reformation took hold, Protestants began insisting that the sole source of belief must be scripture. And of course, this reopened the question of exactly which books belonged in this scripture.

Luther felt that the truth of the Word of God could only be found in early writings. The books of the Septuagint that were originally part of the Hebrew Bible were trustworthy, but the additional Greek commentaries included with it, were not. When he published his German translation of the Bible, Luther omitted some of these contested books entirely and moved the rest into their own section, called Apocrypha, between the Old and New Testaments. Although the term ‘apocrypha’ (from the Greek word for ‘obscure’) had been used for disputed scripture since the 5th century, this was the first time that a Bible had been published with a separate section for them. The New Testament didn’t escape unscathed either. The Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistles of James and John, and Revelations were moved to the back of the New Testament. Although Luther didn’t label them apocrypha, by changing the order they appeared he cast doubt on their authority and this was a significant decision about the canon. In response, the Catholic Church initiated the Counter-Reformation, beginning with the Council of Trent in 1545. This declared that the Vulgate Bible was canon, including all of the deuterocanonical books that the Protestants had labelled apocrypha.

> Early Church Fathers believed canonical Bible books were ‘self-authenticating’. They claimed to hear God in them

For almost all Christian denominations, the Bible canon is now closed. Final dogmatic pronouncements have been made that define which documents form Holy Scripture and no new revelations from God will be allowed. However, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormon Church) takes the view that new prophets and apostles may arise one day in the future, and their Bible (which already contains several 19th-century books) can be added to as required. This is the only major Christian Church that still has an open canon.


BEATVS LAVRENTIVS.

This page from a Swedish gospel, shows St Jerome presenting the Vulgate Bible to Pope Damasus I

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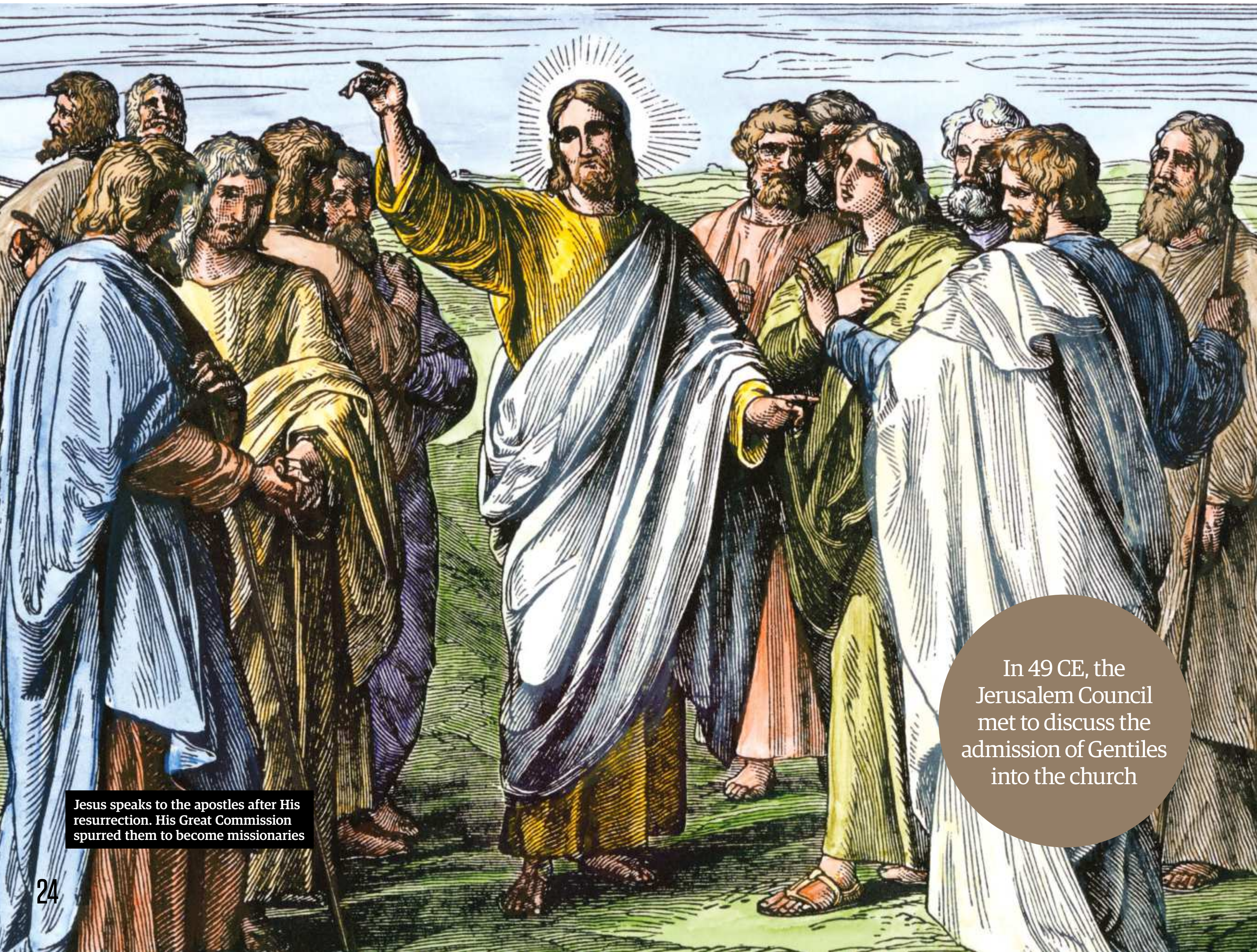
Go and make disciples

During the first millennium, missionaries carried the Gospel worldwide, and Christianity grew from a fringe movement of Judaism to one of the world's great religions



Jesus speaks to the apostles after His resurrection. His Great Commission spurred them to become missionaries

In 49 CE, the Jerusalem Council met to discuss the admission of Gentiles into the church

The Gospel of Matthew says that Jesus Christ charged his followers, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

In the wake of the Great Commission, as these words have come to be known, Christian missionaries did indeed travel throughout the known world, spreading the Gospel, the message of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the salvation to be found therein. Early missionaries took to their task with a sense of great urgency, believing that the return of Jesus Christ was imminent. Amid persecution, internal discord, and great distance, the Christian movement grew from a heretical sect of Judaism to the most prominent religion of the Western world and made inroads across the globe, to the Indian subcontinent and the Far East.

While in Scotland in 565 CE, Irish missionary Columba described the first reported sighting of the Loch Ness Monster

Prior to His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus had embarked on His own two-year ministry, preaching and spreading the word that in His person God was walking among the people with a message of redemption. Scholars date the period of His ministry on Earth to sometime around 30 CE. Once commissioned, the apostles did carry out their charge.

The principal players in the growth of the early Christian church are Peter and Paul. Jesus identified Peter as "the rock upon which I will build my church," and Peter is revered as the first Bishop of Rome, or Pope, and as the Patriarch of Antioch in the tradition of the Eastern Christian church. Peter undertook missionary forays to settlements in Palestine, including Joppa, Lydda, and Caesarea. He later journeyed to Rome and, along with the Apostle Paul, established the church there that contributed to the flourishing of the Christian community and the further growth of the faith beyond Rome itself.

The Apostle Paul experienced one of the most dramatic transformations in the history of the Christian church. Born Saul of Tarsus, he was a prominent persecutor of early Christians who held the coats of the mob that surrounded and stoned to death Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Then, on the road to Damascus, Paul experienced a dramatic encounter with God and became perhaps the foremost Christian missionary of the early church. His letters and writings account for 14 of the 27 books of the Bible's New Testament. Paul is also credited with taking the Gospel to the Gentiles, rather than restricting the message of salvation only to the Jews.

According to the book of Acts, Paul embarked on three major missionary journeys during the 1st century. His travels, in company with Barnabas, John Mark, and Silas, encompassed much of the Mediterranean basin, Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia, the Middle East, the Iberian Peninsula, Sicily, Malta, and Rome. Paul used his status as a Jew and a Roman citizen to facilitate his ministry. The account of his time in prison is one of the most stirring examples of faith in the early church.

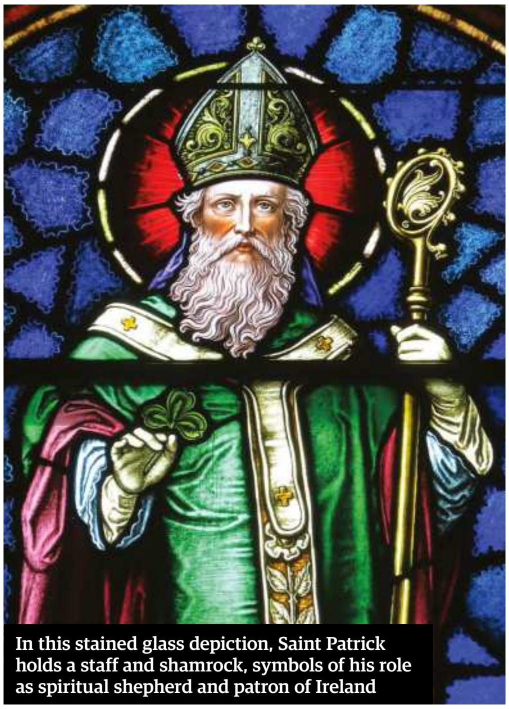
Although some historians disagree, the author of the Gospel of Mark is generally thought to be Mark the Evangelist, who was involved with missionary work in Egypt about 42 CE and is credited with bringing the Christian message to Africa. Mark founded the Church of Alexandria, the forerunner of Coptic and orthodox churches in the Middle East. He also travelled along with Peter and transcribed some of Peter's sermons.

Meanwhile, Thomas reached India and introduced Christian teachings to the subcontinent while Thaddeus is credited with establishing the Christian church in Armenia. In 327, Roman Emperor Constantine was baptised, greatly influenced by his mother Helena, a prominent convert. Subsequently, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Although Rome was assailed by numerous barbarian tribes, many of these pagans came to embrace Christianity. Among such prominent adherents was the Frankish King Clovis. By the 5th century, persecution of early Christians in the Middle East, the dispersal of Christians throughout Europe, and the dedicated work of early missionaries had brought the faith to a much wider audience, resulting in significant growth.

One of the most famous missionaries of the early church was Saint Patrick, patron saint of Ireland. Patrick was said to have been kidnapped by Irish pirates as a youth and taken to the island from his home in Britain. After escaping and returning to his family, he became a missionary and returned to Ireland, where he baptised hundreds and established churches. Legends surround Patrick's ministry, including his use of the shamrock as a representation of the Holy Trinity and the tale that he banished the snakes from Ireland.

Throughout the first millennium, Christian missionaries risked their lives to spread the Gospel. Many were martyred; however, the religion took root and grew rapidly in Europe. In 596, Pope Gregory I sent Augustine, a Benedictine monk, to England to reinvigorate the faith. Within a year, 10,000 people were baptised, and Canterbury became the seat of the church. Augustine became the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

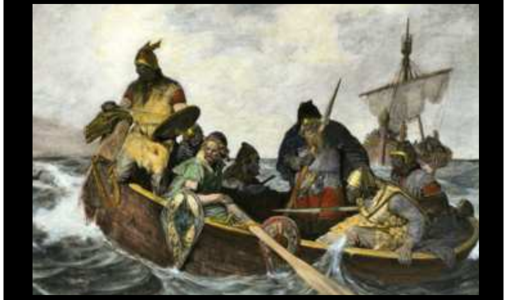
In 637, the Lombards of northern Italy converted from pagan worship to Christianity. In the late 7th century St Willibrord and 11 followers crossed the North Sea from the British Isles, bringing Christianity to the Frisians of the modern-day Netherlands, and by the early 10th century missionaries had converted King Harold I of Denmark and the Normans had embraced the faith.


In this stained glass depiction, Saint Patrick holds a staff and shamrock, symbols of his role as spiritual shepherd and patron of Ireland

A Viking Christian

Although the Vikings are remembered as a fearsome seafaring and exploring people who raided villages and terrorised Europe from the 8th to the 11th centuries, at least one notable Norseman also wore the hat of a Christian missionary. During his voyages, Leif Eriksson, second son of Erik the Red, sailed from his native Greenland to Norway, where he was converted to Christianity by King Olaf Tryggvason. About 1,000 CE, King Olaf dispatched Eriksson, also known as Leif the Lucky, back to his homeland with the commission to convert the Vikings of Greenland to the Christian faith.

While historical accounts of the subsequent voyage differ, Eriksson may have veered off course and made landfall in North America, a vast territory he called Vinland. After his return home from Vinland, Eriksson, who may also have had a Norwegian priest in his company, successfully converted many of his fellow Vikings in Greenland to Christianity. However, an attempt to win his father to the faith was apparently unsuccessful. Erik the Red may have even been hostile to his son's missionary efforts. Nevertheless Leif's mother, Thjodhild, was receptive and later ordered the construction of the first European-style Christian church in Greenland at the settlement of Brattahlid on the southern tip of the great island.


Leif Eriksson stands at the bow of a small boat as he makes his way toward the coastline of Vinland

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The church that Jesus founded

The Roman Catholic Church straddles more eras in human history than any other institution: its story is the story of the creation of the West

The Catholic Church goes back a long way. By its own tradition, it was founded by Jesus himself. Looking at the wider historical record, it is clear that most of the characteristics the church claims for itself - authority, doctrine and universality - were present from early in its history. As early as 180 Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, set out the basis for the Catholic Church as scripture, apostolic succession and the traditions of the faith, particularly in regard to doctrine and conduct.

The primacy of the bishop of Rome in the Catholic Church rests on the belief that he is the successor of Peter, whom the Gospels are unanimous in regarding as the leader of Jesus's Apostles. The tradition that Peter travelled to Rome, taught there and was martyred during the Neronian persecution is extremely old and probably reliable - certainly no other city claims to hold his remains. The first basilica built in Rome, after the official toleration of Christianity in 313, was constructed over Peter's tomb and archaeologists working on St Peter's in the 20th century claim to have discovered his remains, although this is not accepted by all. St Paul was also martyred in Rome, giving the city claim to the two pre-eminent disciples of Christ.

The Neronian persecution that claimed the lives of Peter and Paul lived long in Christian memory - which is not surprising, really, since people tend not to forget seeing their loved ones burnt alive. That this persecution did indeed occur is confirmed by the account of pagan Roman historians such as Tacitus and Suetonius. Although Nero used Christians as scapegoats for the devastating fire that destroyed much of Rome in 64 CE, the basis for the conflict between Christians and the Empire lay in the Christian refusal to make sacrifice to the emperor as a god. Roman state religion was generally tolerant, so long as the state was acknowledged as paramount. Although Christians were generally regarded as good citizens, their resistance to the imperial cult made them obvious targets at times of imperial stress or local conflict.

But early in the 4th century, one of the contenders for the imperial purple, Constantine, had a vision he interpreted as meaning that he would win the Empire by the intervention of the Christian God. Having triumphed at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312, Constantine set about repaying his debt, firstly by issuing the Edict of Milan in 313 that enjoined the legal toleration of Christianity within the Roman Empire and then by embarking upon a massive building programme, of which the first church of St Peter in Rome was one example - and not the most impressive. By 380, Christianity had become the official religion of the Empire.

The title of Mary as Theotokos or 'Mother of God' was approved at the First Council of Ephesus in 431

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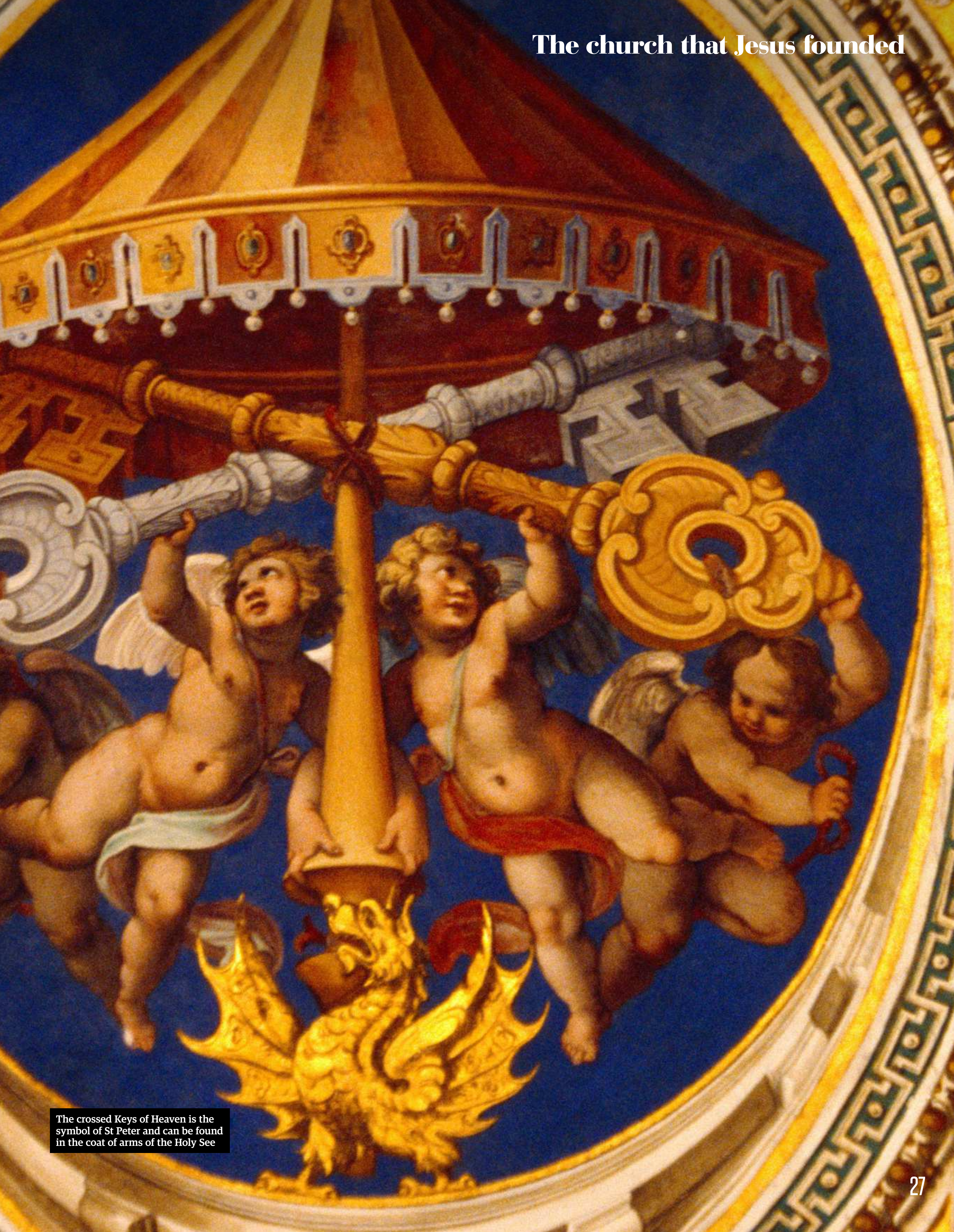


The crossed Keys of Heaven is the symbol of St Peter and can be found in the coat of arms of the Holy See

Constantine made two other decisions of fundamental importance: he founded a new imperial capital in the east and called it after himself, Constantinople. Also, to ensure unity among his Christian subjects, he called the first great council of the church since apostolic times. The Council of Nicaea set out to answer a question fundamental to Christianity: who was Jesus? Arius, a priest from north Africa, argued Jesus was a created being, begotten by God the Father, and thus not equal to him. According to Arius, logically there was a time when Christ did not exist. For the church, this called into question the very basis of its faith. At the council, to which all the bishops of the world were invited – with free travel and accommodation thrown in for good measure – Arius's ideas were debated and rejected. The Council of Nicaea was the first of seven ecumenical councils that were called to settle urgent and divisive questions of what constituted the teachings of the church. Seeing church unity as part and parcel of societal unity, Constantine turned the engines of the Roman state to suppressing heretical churches, although paganism continued to be tolerated.

With the emperor removed to the east, the bishop of Rome inherited much of his temporal authority in Rome, as well as the emperor's title, pontifex maximus, literally the great bridge but an honorific accorded to the chief priest of the Empire. By the 5th century, the western Roman Empire was tottering under the repeated assaults of barbarians. In 410, the eternal city was sacked by Alaric and his Visigoths and, in 452, Rome was again threatened, this time by Attila the Hun. However, Pope Leo I went, as part of an embassy, to speak to Attila before he attacked the city and, somehow, persuaded him to withdraw.

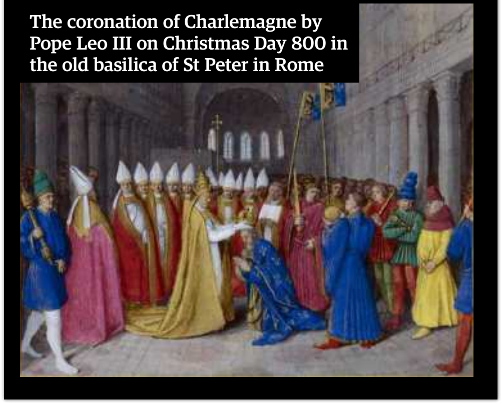
The institutions of the western Roman Empire crumbled under these waves of barbarian assaults. As barbarian chieftains carved out fiefdoms and crowned themselves kings, often the only countervailing centre of authority was the local bishop. For these new kings, the Catholic bishop was a continuation of what they had invaded to acquire: civilisation and all its trappings. In particular, the Franks accepted the authority of the Church and offered themselves as protectors of the papacy. Clovis, the first king of the Franks, married Clotilde, a Christian Burgundian princess and at her behest converted to Catholicism, being baptised, according to some sources, on Christmas Day 496. This was hugely significant for the future of Europe, for it allied papacy and crown and, as the power of the Merovingian dynasty that Clovis founded grew, allowed the consolidation of the church in what would become France and the Low Countries.

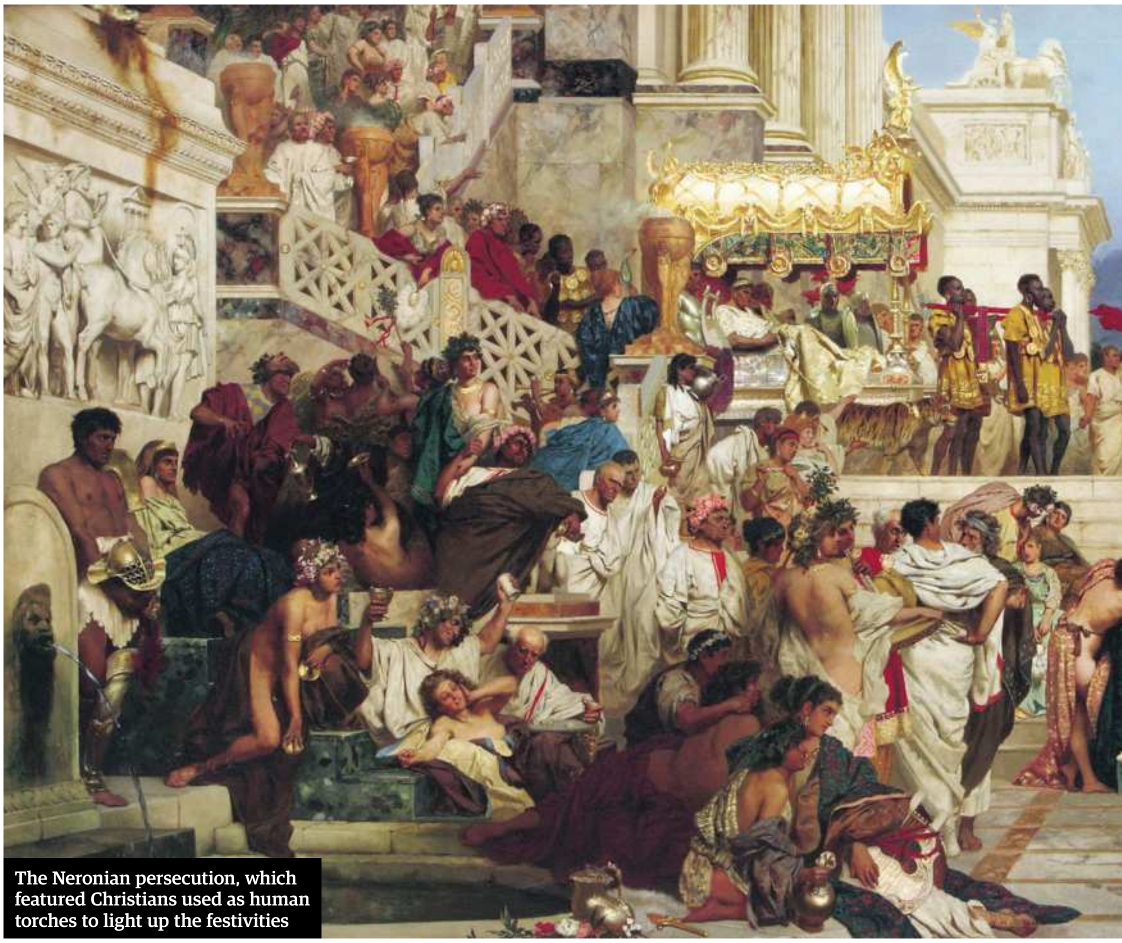
The Roman province of Britannia had fallen to invading waves of pagan Germanic tribes, who pushed the Christian Britons slowly west. Cut off from the rest of Europe, the old literate Roman urban civilisation was completely lost. But then it returned, and from a most unexpected direction. Patrick, a Romano-Briton, did something no one had imagined: he went beyond the boundaries of the Roman world, to Ireland, a country the

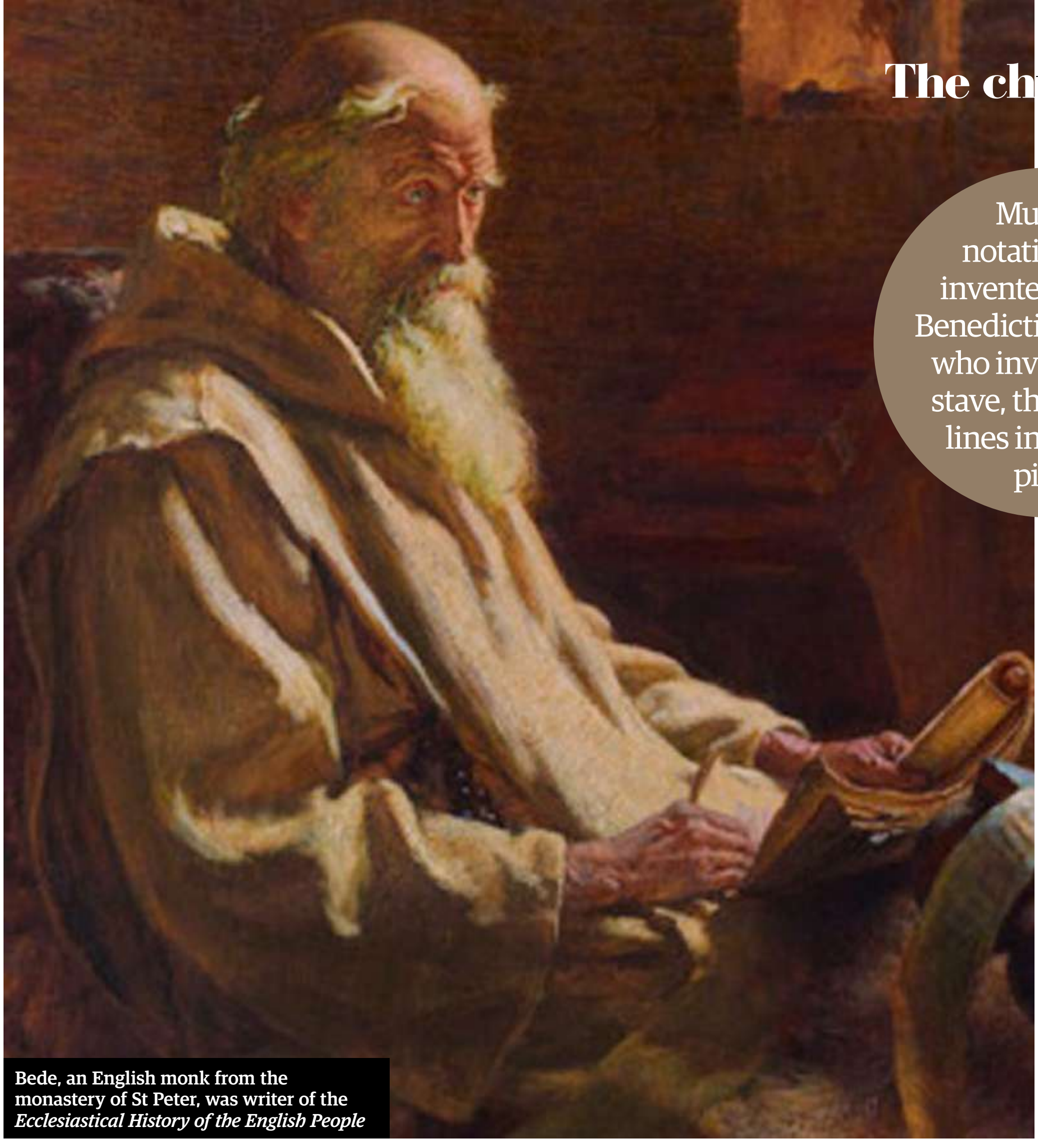
The world's first hospital was built by Basil, bishop of Caesarea; 16 centuries before the NHS, it provided free health care

The Pope and the Emperor

For the Byzantines, there was only one Roman empire and it was ruled from Constantinople. So when Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Holy Roman Emperor on Christmas Day 800 in the old basilica of St Peter in Rome, in Byzantium the coronation was seen as an usurpation of their imperial dignity. But the intrigues of Byzantine politics had conspired to see a woman, Irene, reign as empress at this time, and a marriage was mooted between her and Charlemagne to unite the two crowns. But Byzantine reluctance to marry an upstart barbarian, and Irene's deposition in 802, put paid to this plan. For the pope who had crowned Charlemagne, however, it proved a master stroke. According to contemporary accounts, Charlemagne had not expected the coronation. He was at Rome to support Pope Leo III in his struggles with his enemies and, attending mass at St Peter's, Charlemagne was kneeling when Leo approached and crowned him, to the immediate acclamation of the congregation. More probably, the coronation was payback for Charlemagne's support for Leo. The pope had been elected on 26 December 796 but the supporters and family of Leo's predecessor, Adrian I, never accepted his election and on 25 April 799, when Leo was processing to the Flaminian Gate, they attacked him, knocking Leo to the ground and trying to tear out his eyes and tongue, thus rendering him unfit for office. Leo survived, just, and fled Rome, taking refuge with Charlemagne. After staying with the king for a few months, Charlemagne sent him back to Rome with an escort, and followed himself later when Leo's accusers refused to recant their charges of perjury and adultery. Leo cleared himself of these charges by a public oath of innocence on 23 December and, two days later, went on to crown Charlemagne emperor.


The coronation of Charlemagne by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day 800 in the old basilica of St Peter in Rome


The Neronian persecution, which featured Christians used as human torches to light up the festivities


Bede, an English monk from the monastery of St Peter, was writer of the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*

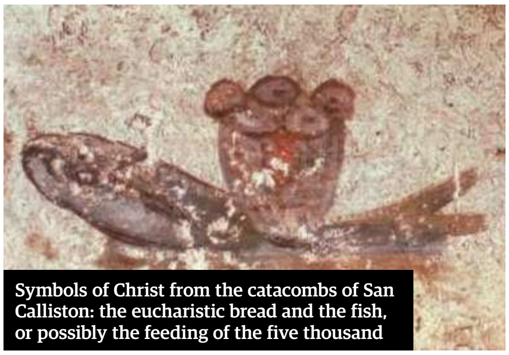
Musical notation was invented by two Benedictine monks, who invented the stave, the parallel lines indicating pitch

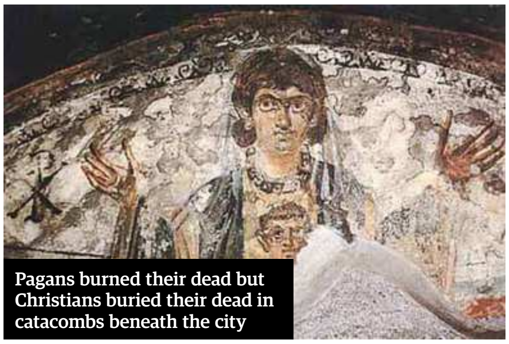
Empire had never conquered. The Christianity he founded there was based on monasteries and the descendants of these monks became instrumental in spreading Christianity to the Angles and Saxons of Britain. Their efforts were helped by a mission dispatched by Pope Gregory to England in 596; Bede, the greatest product of the scholarship produced by the newly converted Anglo-Saxons, tells in his history of the church in Britain how Gregory saw fair-haired youths for sale in Rome's market and, on finding out they were Angles, remarked, "Non Angli, sed angeli," (not Angles but angels), resolving to bring them into the church.

Meanwhile in France, after two centuries the Merovingian dynasty had decayed, with effective power wielded by the mayors of the palace, most notably Charles Martel, who defeated Muslim armies at the Battle of Tours in 732, thus stopping what had seemed the unstoppable Muslim advance into Europe. It was Charles's son, Pepin the Short, who wrote to the pope to inquire if it was proper that a king who held no power should still have the title. Pope Zachary replied that it was indeed improper: the man who wielded kingly authority should also bear the title 'king'. With papal approval in the bag, Pepin moved the last Merovingian king into a monastery and became king himself, the first of the Carolingians. His son, Charles, who became known as Charles the Great or Charlemagne, went one step further, being crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day, 800.

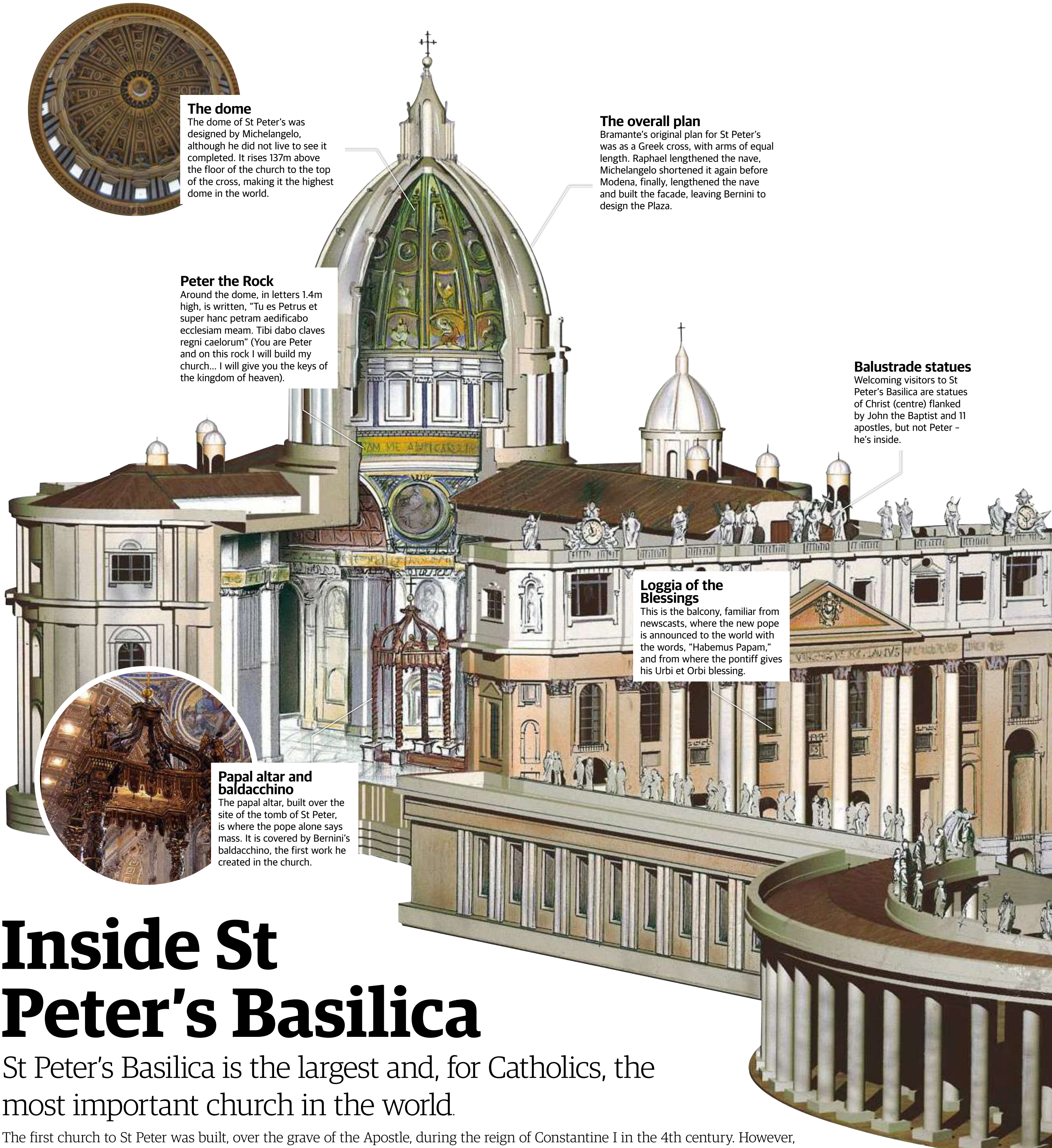
Under Charlemagne's rule, the Carolingian renaissance brought about a renewal of intellectual and cultural life that continued until the dawn of the Viking age brought the renaissance to a halt. When Rome was attacked and St Peter's sacked by Arab raiders in 846, the utility of Frankish support became even clearer. In response, Pope Leo IV built the Leonine Walls, protecting the Vatican. However, this turn to the west would eventually prove a significant factor in the Great Schism with the Eastern Orthodox Church two centuries later.

Through the chaos and violence following the decline of the Western Roman Empire, and then under assaults from pagan Vikings and Muslim Saracens, the Church had maintained the elements of civilised life – literacy, the rule of law, a basis for government beyond force – through its bishops and in monasteries. These carried much of the best of Classical civilisation through the tumult of the centuries, fusing this with the Hebraic culture and thought of the Bible to produce something new. One of the first fruits of this new culture was an institution that would transform the future of the West: the university. The university as a place for the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was one of the unique contributions of the church, and, since they started to appear at around the time of the Great Schism, a fitting place to bring this brief survey of the Catholic Church to an end.


Symbols of Christ from the catacombs of San Calliston: the eucharistic bread and the fish, or possibly the feeding of the five thousand


Pagans burned their dead but Christians buried their dead in catacombs beneath the city

"Christianity had become the religion of the empire"



The dome
The dome of St Peter's was designed by Michelangelo, although he did not live to see it completed. It rises 137m above the floor of the church to the top of the cross, making it the highest dome in the world.

The overall plan
Bramante's original plan for St Peter's was as a Greek cross, with arms of equal length. Raphael lengthened the nave, Michelangelo shortened it again before Modena, finally, lengthened the nave and built the facade, leaving Bernini to design the Plaza.

Peter the Rock
Around the dome, in letters 1.4m high, is written, "Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam. Tibi dabo claves regni caelorum" (You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church… I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven).

Balustrade statues
Welcoming visitors to St Peter's Basilica are statues of Christ (centre) flanked by John the Baptist and 11 apostles, but not Peter – he's inside.

Loggia of the Blessings
This is the balcony, familiar from newscasts, where the new pope is announced to the world with the words, "Habemus Papam," and from where the pontiff gives his Urbi et Orbi blessing.

Papal altar and baldacchino
The papal altar, built over the site of the tomb of St Peter, is where the pope alone says mass. It is covered by Bernini's baldacchino, the first work he created in the church.

Inside St Peter's Basilica

St Peter's Basilica is the largest and, for Catholics, the most important church in the world.

The first church to St Peter was built, over the grave of the Apostle, during the reign of Constantine I in the 4th century. However, Old St Peter's had fallen into disrepair by the late 15th century and Pope Julius II was determined to demolish the old church and build a new one on the site. To finance the rebuilding program, Julius authorised the sale of indulgences, which roused the outrage of a previously obscure German monk called Martin Luther. Thus the new St Peter's Church would be one of the triggers of the Reformation. The original design for the church was by Bramante. After Bramante's death, Raphael contributed to the design but when he died aged only 37, it was eventually left Michelangelo to bring St Peter's to completion, even though he was already in his 70s when Pope Paul III dropped the job on to his plate.

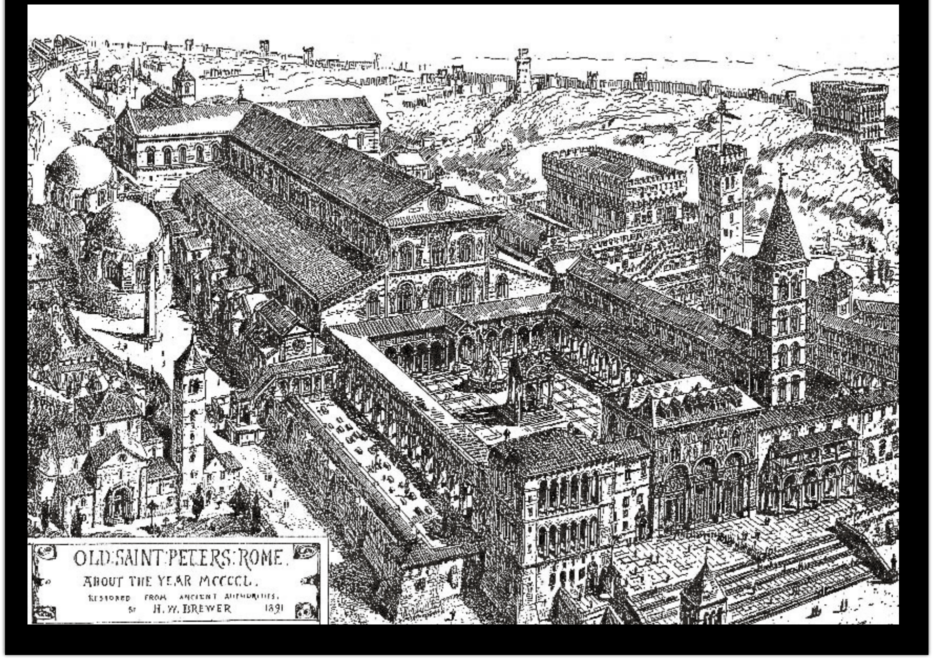
St Peter's Basilica works on a central plan

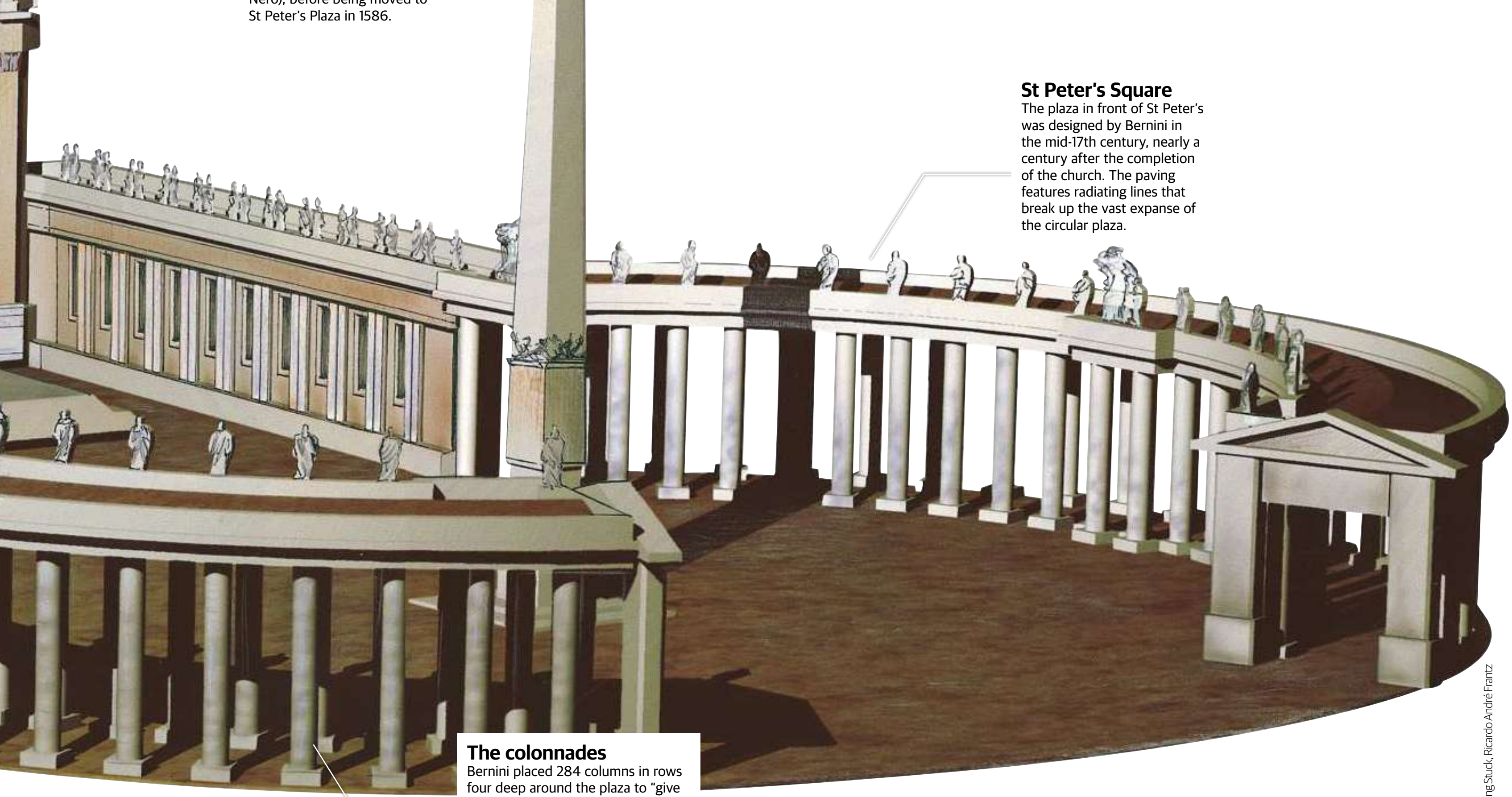
The building invites holy experience

> "The [Old St Peter's] church became famous in the medieval world for its 100 columns"

Old St Peter's Basilica

Old St Peter's Basilica was built alongside, and partly over, the Circus of Nero, the site of Peter's martyrdom. The centre of the circus was marked by an Egyptian obelisk and this still stands, having been moved to the centre of St Peter's Square in 1586. Old St Peter's was built in the traditional style of a Roman basilica but on a grander scale, with four aisles rather two, and a hugely long nave; the church became famous in the medieval world for its 100 columns.


OLD SAINT PETERS: ROME.
ABOUT THE YEAR MCCCCL.
RESTORED FROM ANCIENT AUTHORITIES.
BY H.W. BREWER 1891



The Vatican Obelisk
In the centre of Rome is a tall piece of ancient Egypt. Originally erected in Heliopolis, it was brought to Rome by order of Caligula and placed at the centre of his circus (also called the Circus of Nero), before being moved to St Peter's Plaza in 1586.

St Peter's Square
The plaza in front of St Peter's was designed by Bernini in the mid-17th century, nearly a century after the completion of the church. The paving features radiating lines that break up the vast expanse of the circular plaza.

The colonnades
Bernini placed 284 columns in rows four deep around the plaza to "give an open-armed, maternal welcome to all Catholics". Bernini's pupils put in the 140 statues of saints that surmount the colonnade.

© So90, Wolfgang Stuck, Ricardo André Frantz

The other church of Jesus

The Eastern Orthodox Church produced a fusion of church and empire unparalleled elsewhere and one that has left a living legacy to our own time

The Eastern Orthodox Church, as with the Roman Catholic Church, holds that its foundation goes back to the time of Jesus and that its oldest churches were founded by Jesus's apostles. However, it differs from the Catholic Church in being a federation of churches. While many of these constituent churches match national boundaries, it is more true to say they are local churches that sometimes concur with national boundaries. Each church is self governing, the four oldest being the patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople, although the largest Eastern Orthodox Church today is the Russian Orthodox.

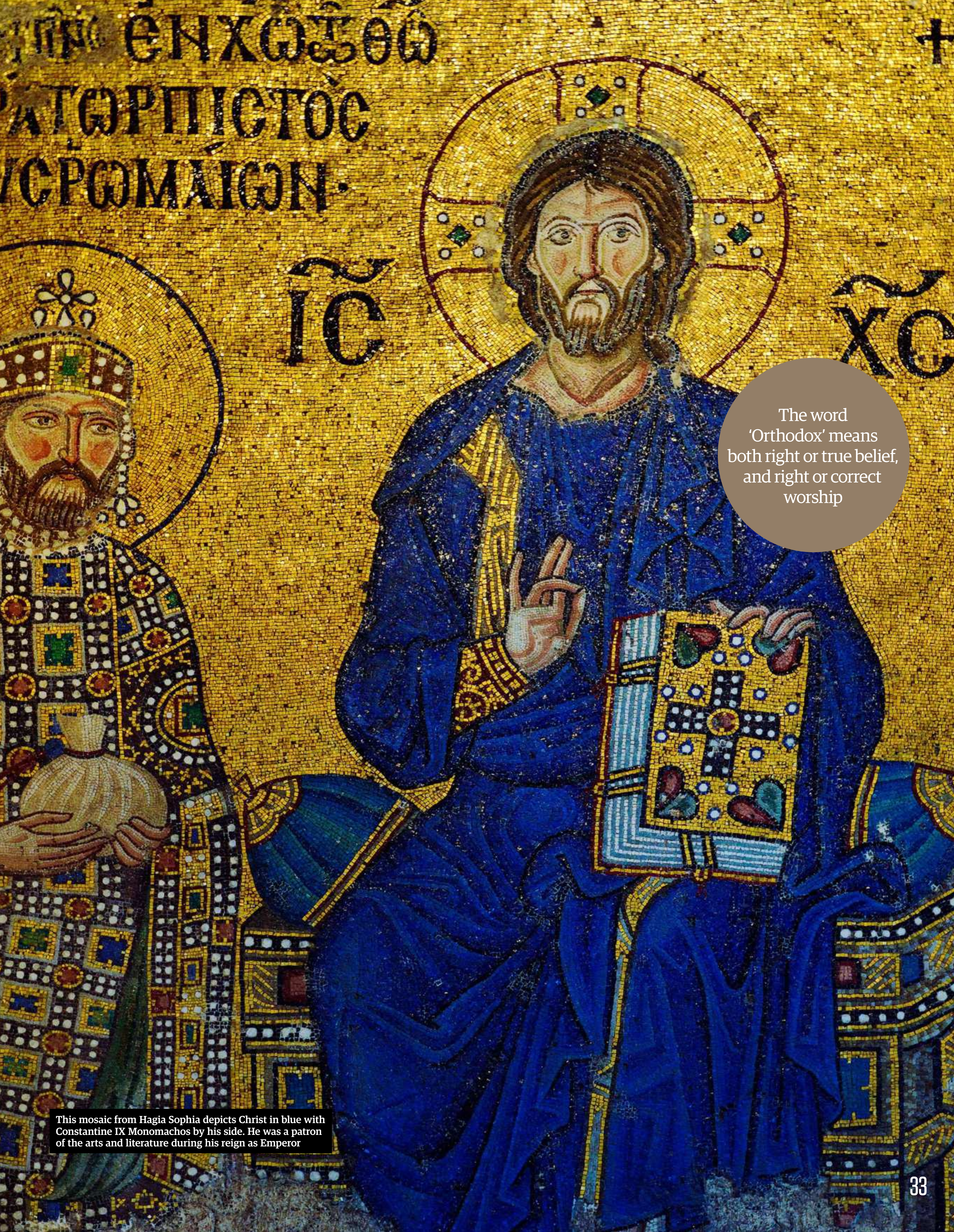
During Divine Liturgy, communion is via a spoon holding bread and wine, which Orthodox believe to be Body and Blood of Christ

The early history of Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Churches was shaped by the memory and reality of Imperial persecution. In such persecutions, the bishops were often targets and we have a remarkable series of letters written by one such bishop, Ignatius of Antioch, as he was being taken under military escort to Rome for execution. From his letters, it seems that Ignatius already knew how he was going to be killed: by being mauled by wild animals. On the long journey, Ignatius was allowed to meet fellow Christians as well as the bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp (who would himself be martyred many years later), as well as writing letters to a series of churches that regarded themselves as bound together into a spiritual unity. So, from early in its history, the Church regarded itself as one and its mission as universal: Ignatius was the first person recorded to call the Church 'catholic' (ie, universal). Ignatius also taught that the Church was a community gathered around its bishop, and this teaching lies at the heart of the Orthdodox Church's structure. Ignatius was martyred around 107.

For the next two centuries, persecutions flared on and off, more usually determined by the greed or incompetence of local governors than Imperial policy, although there were determined attempts to force Christians to sacrifice to the Imperial cult - thus acknowledging the primacy of the emperor - during the reigns of Decius, Valerian and Diocletian. The last was the most dangerous, as Diocletian was one of the most effective of Roman emperors, having stabilised the Empire after the crises of the 3rd century. However, one of the men Diocletian had installed as co-emperor in the tetrarchy he created, Constantius, was notably unenthusiastic about the policy and generally ignored it. This was to prove hugely significant for the Eastern Orthodox Church since Constantius's son and successor, Constantine, inherited from his father an interest in Christianity that proved pivotal in the civil struggles that occurred after the death of Diocletian.

ΑΥΤΟΚΡ
ΒΑCΙΛΕΥ

© Alamy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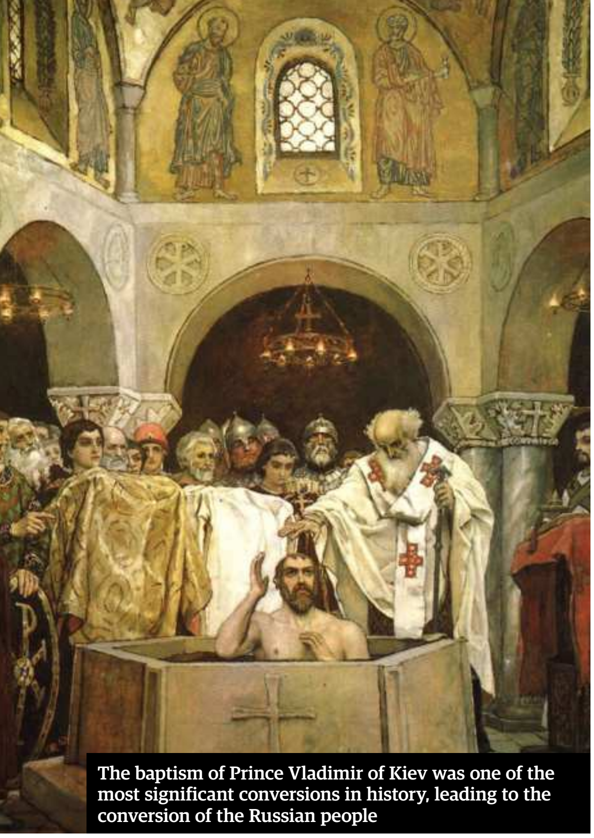
This mosaic from Hagia Sophia depicts Christ in blue with Constantine IX Monomachos by his side. He was a patron of the arts and literature during his reign as Emperor

The word ‘Orthodox’ means both right or true belief, and right or correct worship



The baptism of Prince Vladimir of Kiev was one of the most significant conversions in history, leading to the conversion of the Russian people

The Battle of the Milvian Bridge is commemorated in Constantine's triumphal arch in Rome, with the figures at the bottom showing his men driving Maxentius's soldiers into the River Tiber

The Chi-Rho symbol became part of Constantine's standard and is here shown on the reverse of one of his coins

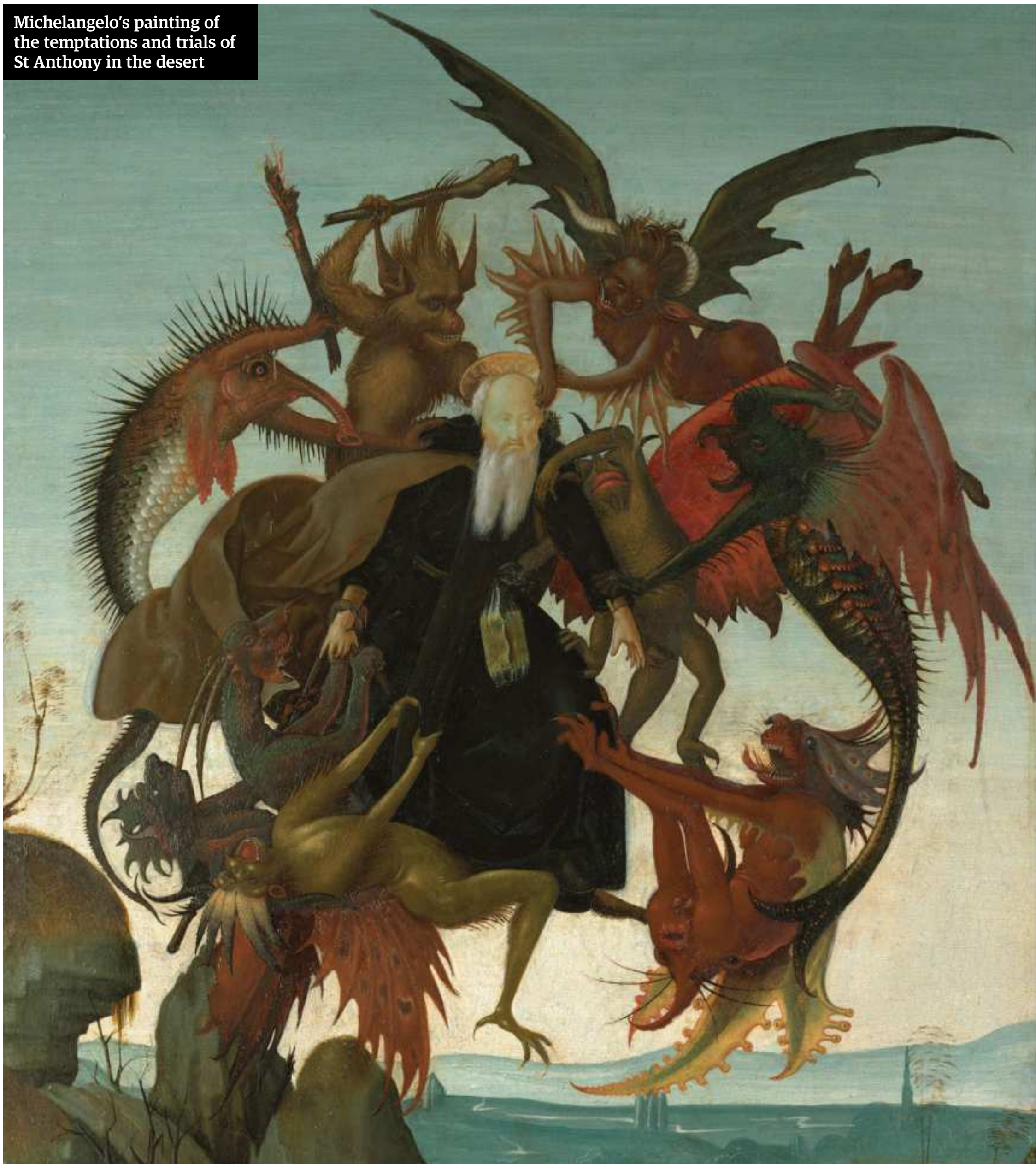
When Constantine had a vision, he became convinced that victory would come to him through the agency of the Christian God. In the subsequent Battle of the Milvian Bridge, his troops advanced bearing the Chi-Rho symbol, the first two letters of Christ in Greek, and though outnumbered they defeated the soldiers of the Emperor Maxentius, delivering Rome into Constantine's hands. No pair of hands were to prove more significant in the next century. Having issued the Edict of Milan in 313, which returned to Christians their legal rights within the Empire, Constantine set upon a huge building programme. But nowhere was this programme larger than in the new Imperial capital he established in the east: Constantinople. Rome was a city where the old pagan gods, while no longer dominant, still held sway. Constantinople would be a Christian city from its foundation in 324.

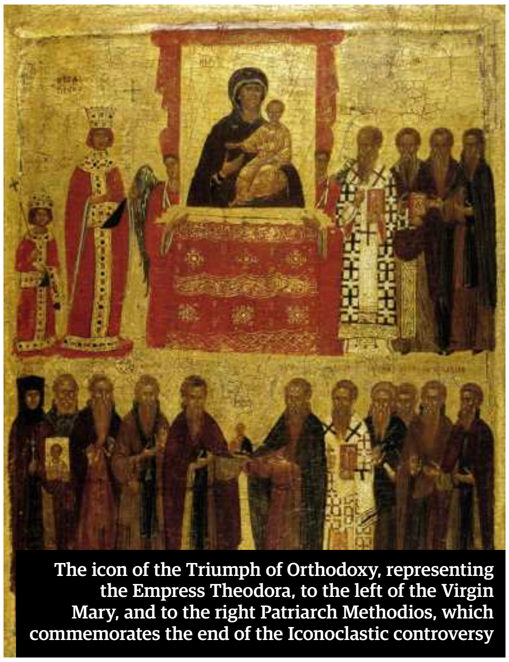
However, having an emperor sympathetic to the Church (Constantine was only baptised as he was dying) also meant having an emperor who would get involved in its running. To Constantine's tidy mind, the theological disputes that divided Christians needed to be sorted to ensure unity. So he called a council, inviting all the bishops. This ecumenical council, the first since the Council of Jerusalem in 50 CE, became known as the First Council of Nicaea and is one of seven councils that are accepted by the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Churches.

> The schisms in church history all follow linguistic lines: the first split Syriac-speaking Oriental Orthodox churches from others

But with Imperial acceptance, and then favour, came the concomitant spiritual dangers of worldliness and ambition. Where Christianity had once been a faith accepted in the knowledge that professing it might cost your life, now it became a necessity in order to advance up the Imperial hierarchy. In reaction, during the 4th century, men and women began to leave the comforts of civilisation and strike out into the desert and wilderness to be alone with God. St Anthony of Egypt (c.251-356) was the prototype

Michelangelo's painting of the temptations and trials of St Anthony in the desert

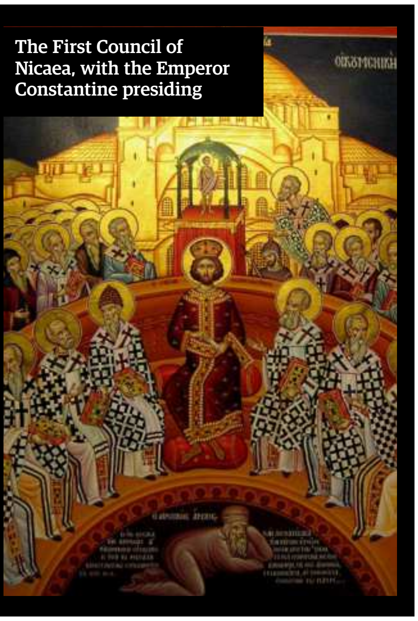




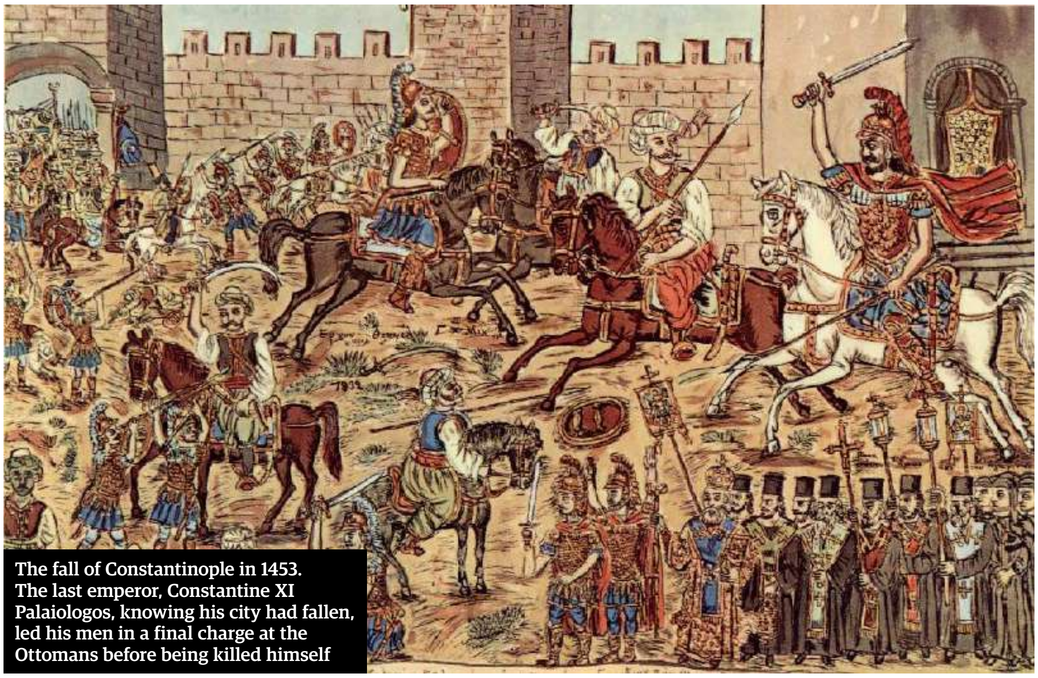
The icon of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, representing the Empress Theodora, to the left of the Virgin Mary, and to the right Patriarch Methodios, which commemorates the end of the Iconoclastic controversy

The Seven Councils

The seven Ecumenical Councils held between the Council of Nicaea in 325 and the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 are recognised by the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches as authoritative. They were called to settle the organisation of the Church and the relationship between the five ancient patriarchates (Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem), and to settle key questions of doctrine concerning the Trinity and the nature of Jesus as fully God and wholly human. So far as the patriarchates were concerned, these were the most ancient bishoprics of the Church, founded in Apostolic times, apart from Constantinople. As the seat of the emperor and the new Rome, Constantinople petitioned for inclusion with the first four patriarchates, which it received at the First Council of Constantinople (381). The question of the nature of Christ dominated the Council of Chalcedon (451), leading the Council to declare Jesus 'truly God and truly man-like us in all things, sin apart', while the Second Council of Nicaea (787) declared the veneration of icons to be licit. These were not dry debating sessions, but impassioned meetings that sometimes came to blows between the bishops.



The First Council of Nicaea, with the Emperor Constantine presiding



The fall of Constantinople in 1453. The last emperor, Constantine XI Palaiologos, knowing his city had fallen, led his men in a final charge at the Ottomans before being killed himself

for many, starting as a solitary hermit and then attracting a community of monks to him. From the 10th century, the centre of Orthodox monasticism has been Mount Athos in Greece. To give some idea of its importance, one monastery on Athos, the Great Lavra, has produced 26 patriarchs and nearly 150 bishops. One of the reasons for this is the 'elder', an insightful monk whom other monks and lay people adopt as their spiritual guide.

Monks and emperors were also to play a key role in the Iconoclast controversy, from 726 to 843. This controversy, which nearly tore apart the eastern, Greek-speaking churches, was over the legitimacy or otherwise of representations of Jesus and the saints, and in particular the use of icons in worship. Go into an Orthodox church today and you will see it virtually luminous with icons. But the Iconoclasts maintained that the practice of painting and venerating icons went against the Second Commandment, which condemns the making of graven images, and was tantamount to idolatry. The controversy was long and bitter, the stakes raised higher by the Byzantine Empire's struggle for its very existence against the advancing armies of Islam. Muslims decried the use of images and their success against the Christian Byzantines encouraged a succession of emperors to believe that their idolatry was one of the reasons for the Muslim advance. It took the final ecumenical council, the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, called by the Empress Irene, and then another remarkable Byzantine empress, Theodora, in 843, to finally restore the use and veneration of icons in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The Islamic conquests from the 7th century saw the ancient patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria fall under Muslim rule. With only Constantinople remaining under Christian control, the patriarchate there had no rival among the churches of the east. In seeking allies for their struggles with the caliphate, the emperors of Byzantium looked north. The man who would prove the most momentous of these allies, Prince Vladimir of Kiev, seemed an unlikely choice: he was a pagan with 800 concubines to keep him going when his four wives were tired. However, as Vladimir's realm grew, he had become interested in the contending religions that surrounded his people, and sent out representatives to learn more. Muslim Bulgars, no doubt aware of Vladimir's reputation, promised him an afterlife where all his carnal desires would be fulfilled, but at the price of circumcision and abstinence from pork and wine. Vladimir found the first part of the deal desirable but as for the latter… As he said, "Drinking is the joy of the Rus. We cannot exist without that pleasure." But when Vladimir's envoys attended Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, they thought themselves in heaven. Hearing this, when Emperor Basil II sent to Vladimir for help, Vladimir replied that the price would be marrying Basil's sister, Anna. Deciding to lay down his sister for the sake of the empire, Basil married Anna to Vladimir. In return, Vladimir sent Basil 6,000 Varangians, the most feared warriors of the day, and converted to the Eastern Orthodox Church, dismissing his 800 concubines and four wives in favour of Anna. But a prince's conversion was public as well as personal: Vladimir took his people, the Rus, with him into Orthodoxy, in one of the most significant conversions in history. For the Rus became the Russians, and as their power grew, the centre of the Orthodox world shifted north. When, in 1453, Constantinople fell to the armies of the Ottoman sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, the patriarch of Moscow took over as the de facto guardian and leader of the Orthodox world.

Inside Hagia Sophia

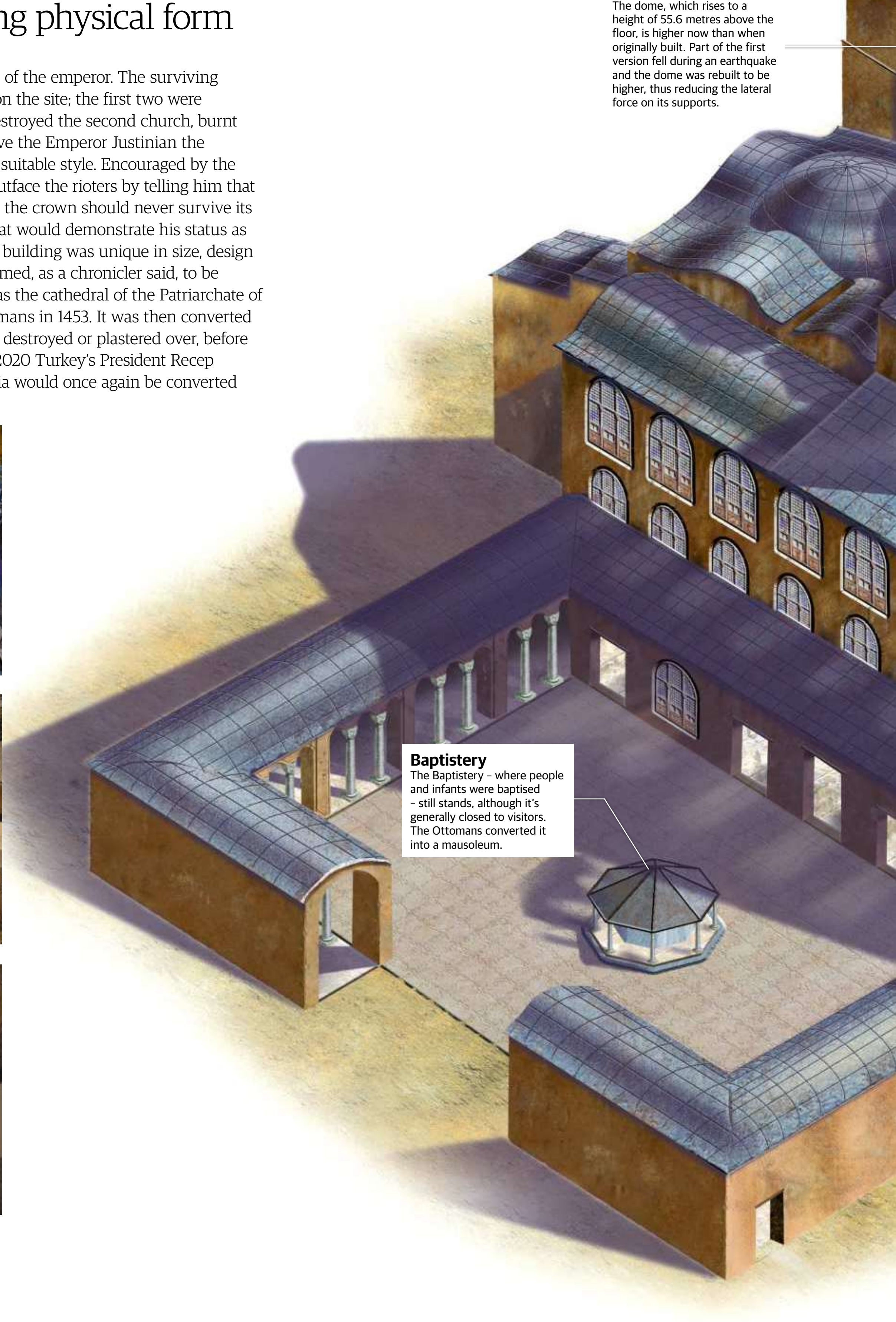
The Church of Holy Wisdom was where the spiritual and temporal power of the Eastern Roman Empire met and took staggering physical form

The Hagia Sophia was built next to the palace of the emperor. The surviving building is the third church of Holy Wisdom on the site; the first two were destroyed during riots. The Nika Riots, that destroyed the second church, burnt much of the city and left 30,000 dead, but gave the Emperor Justinian the opportunity to rebuild the Imperial church in suitable style. Encouraged by the Empress Theodora (who had steeled him to outface the rioters by telling him that she would not run, for “Those who have worn the crown should never survive its loss”) Justinian set about building a church that would demonstrate his status as emperor anointed by God. He succeeded. The building was unique in size, design and magnificence. In particular, the dome seemed, as a chronicler said, to be suspended from heaven. The Hagia Sophia was the cathedral of the Patriarchate of Constantinople until the city’s fall to the Ottomans in 1453. It was then converted to a mosque, and most of the interior mosaics destroyed or plastered over, before being turned into a museum in 1934. In July 2020 Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared that the Hagia Sophia would once again be converted into a mosque.

Restorations are recovering some of the lost details

The *mihrab*, where the altar used to stand, points to Mecca

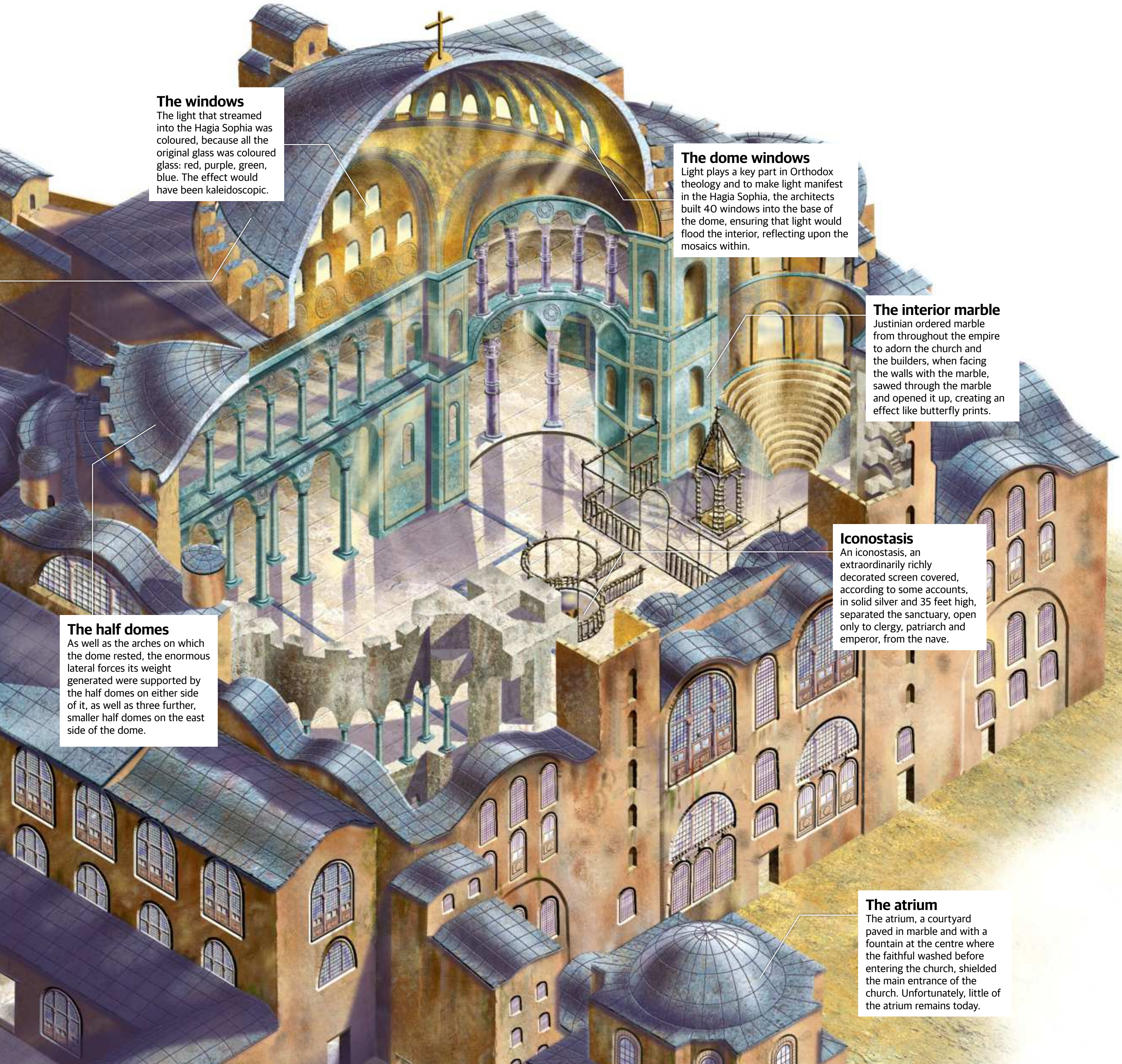
The upper gallery was reserved for the empress and her court



The dome
The dome, which rises to a height of 55.6 metres above the floor, is higher now than when originally built. Part of the first version fell during an earthquake and the dome was rebuilt to be higher, thus reducing the lateral force on its supports.

Baptistery
The Baptistery – where people and infants were baptised – still stands, although it’s generally closed to visitors. The Ottomans converted it into a mausoleum.

The other church of Jesus



The windows
The light that streamed into the Hagia Sophia was coloured, because all the original glass was coloured glass: red, purple, green, blue. The effect would have been kaleidoscopic.

The dome windows
Light plays a key part in Orthodox theology and to make light manifest in the Hagia Sophia, the architects built 40 windows into the base of the dome, ensuring that light would flood the interior, reflecting upon the mosaics within.

The interior marble
Justinian ordered marble from throughout the empire to adorn the church and the builders, when facing the walls with the marble, sawed through the marble and opened it up, creating an effect like butterfly prints.

Iconostasis
An iconostasis, an extraordinarily richly decorated screen covered, according to some accounts, in solid silver and 35 feet high, separated the sanctuary, open only to clergy, patriarch and emperor, from the nave.

The half domes
As well as the arches on which the dome rested, the enormous lateral forces its weight generated were supported by the half domes on either side of it, as well as three further, smaller half domes on the east side of the dome.

The atrium
The atrium, a courtyard paved in marble and with a fountain at the centre where the faithful washed before entering the church, shielded the main entrance of the church. Unfortunately, little of the atrium remains today.

Mosaics
The original mosaics, commissioned by Justinian, were mainly decorative rather than figurative. The figurative mosaics that have been restored since the conversion from mosque to museum mainly date to after the end of the Iconoclastic controversy.

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The Great Schism

There are more than 40 different Christian denominations today, but the schism of 1054 was the longest and bloodiest disagreement in Church history

At the start of the 11th century, Christianity was everywhere, with 50 million souls under a single religion. Just a few decades later it had torn itself in half, apparently over trivial disagreements. How did an entire religion become so divided over such tiny details?

Schisms, or splits, in the Church were nothing new. There was a mini schism from 343 to 398, when followers of Bishop Arius began preaching that Jesus had not existed before he was created by God the Father. This made Jesus effectively subordinate to God and was declared heretical at the First Council of Nicea in 325. But Arianism remained popular for a while and Emperor Constantine I was baptised by an Arian bishop. Then in 404 there was another split, when the Byzantine emperor Arcadius banished John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople, for criticising the emperor's wife. This rift was patched up in 415 (albeit eight years after Chrysostom's death), but temporary splits between the Eastern and Western Church occurred quite regularly. Each time they would find a way to reconcile the two sides, but in the five centuries leading up to the Great Schism of 1054, the Church had been in schism for a total of 231 years!

> The Latin 'cathedra' means 'chair'. When the pope speaks 'ex cathedra', he speaks 'from his chair', i.e. officially

The fundamental source of all the disagreements can be traced to the breakup of the Roman Empire. In 285 the Empire had become too big to control from a single capital, so Emperor Diocletian divided it into two halves. The Eastern half was controlled from the city of Byzantium, which later became Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul). The Western Empire kept Rome as its capital, but didn't last long. Germanic and Frankish tribes took over Western Europe and by 476, Odoacer had conquered Italy, and the Western Roman Empire was over.

The Church, meanwhile, had organised itself under a series of patriarchs. These were like super-archbishops, and there were five of them: Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Constantinople and Rome. The patriarchs were theoretically equal to each other, but in practice the patriarchs of Constantinople and Rome had more influence because their seats were the capitals of the Eastern and Western Empires, respectively. By a quirk of geography, the patriarch of Rome was also the *only* patriarch in the western half and when the Western Empire fell, the patriarch of Rome – or pope, as he came to be known – was in charge of churches that lay outside of the territory of the Eastern emperor, even though he was still theoretically answerable to that emperor.

This arrangement pleased neither party. Until the 8th century, the seal of approval from the Eastern emperor was required before a new patriarch could be appointed. This was mostly a rubber stamping exercise, but by the 6th century the papacy became increasingly uncomfortable with accepting this interference from the Eastern emperor. To get around this, the Western Church looked for a secular leader of its own, and on Christmas Day 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Holy Roman emperor. This move effectively removed the pope from the authority of Empress Irene of Constantinople. The pope was increasingly acting as if he had greater authority than the other patriarchs.

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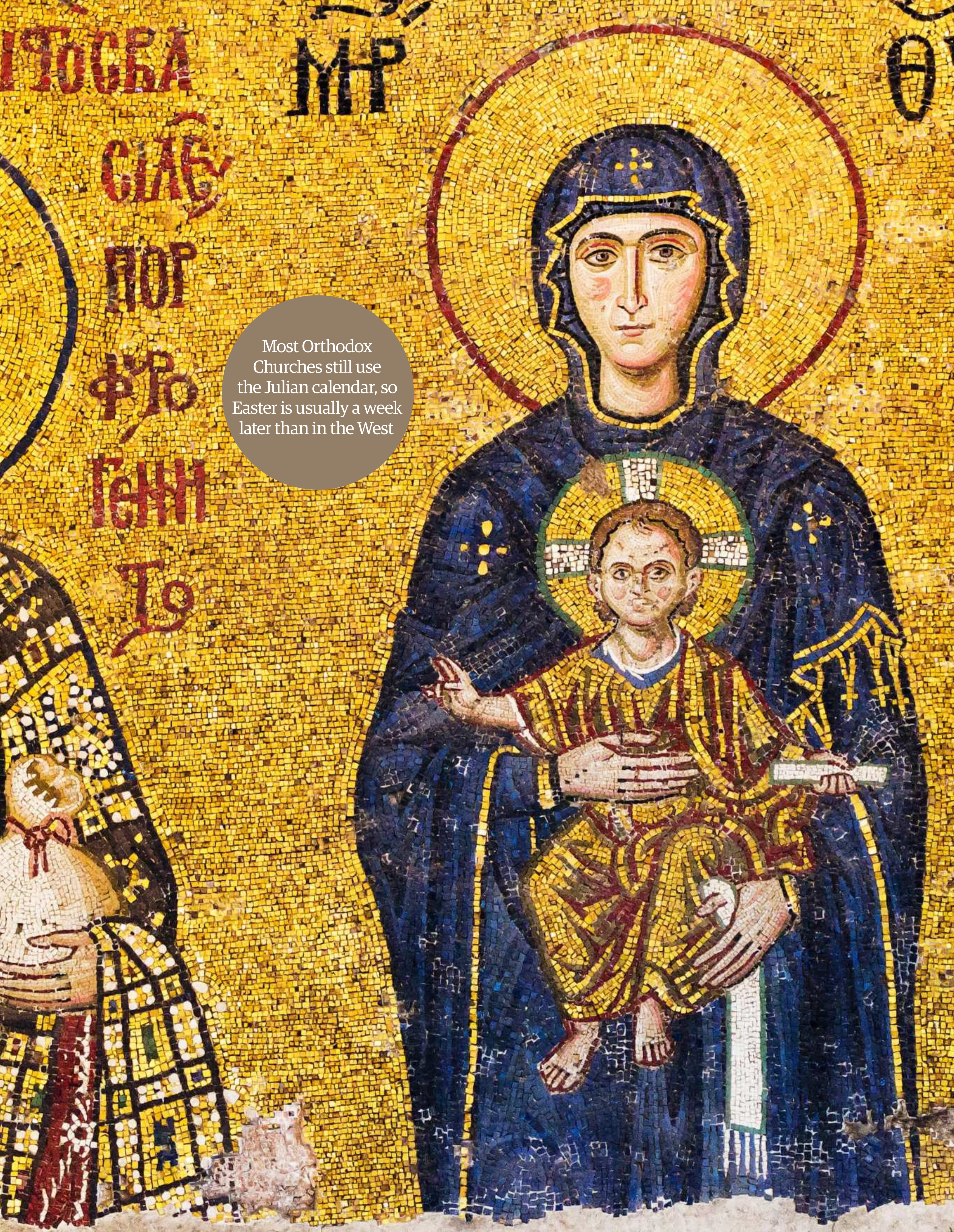
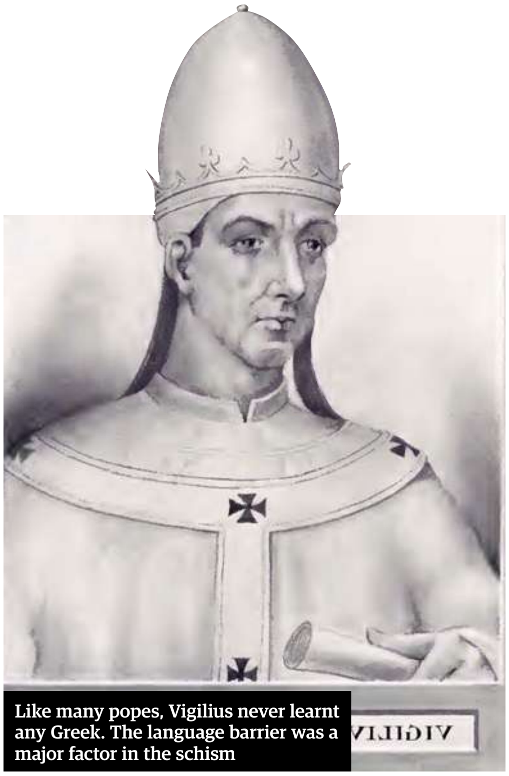


Most Orthodox Churches still use the Julian calendar, so Easter is usually a week later than in the West


Like many popes, Vigilius never learnt any Greek. The language barrier was a major factor in the schism

Another problem was language. The Eastern Empire still used Greek for international diplomacy and for religious services. But in the West, almost no one spoke it any more. They used the Latin language of the old Western Roman Empire, which was understood by almost no one in the East. The language difference created a cultural isolation that allowed subtle differences in religious ceremonies to go unnoticed. Over time the Greek and Latin services drifted apart and these minor details eventually grew into major doctrinal sticking points.

The Nicene Creed is an important example of this. The text of this declaration of Christian faith was agreed at the Council of Nicea in 325, then amended slightly at the Council of Constantinople 56 years later. The idea of God existing as Father, Son and Holy Spirit had been around for 200 years, but at Nicea, the Church Fathers attempted to specify the nature of this. The Nicene Creed states that the Holy Ghost "proceeds from the Father". In other words, that God the Father is the source of the Holy Spirit, which by implication means that God the Son (Jesus) is not. In the West, there were concerns that this could be interpreted to mean that the Father is the only true God and that Jesus is somehow less divine than God, or even not really divine at all. This was worryingly close to the Arian heresy of 343. To get around this, in 589, the Western Church tweaked the Creed to say that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father *and the Son*. This ideology is known as Double Procession, because the Holy Ghost proceeds from both Father and Son, equally. The phrase 'and the Son' in Latin is 'filioque' and this change to the Creed is known as the filioque clause.

Because the amended text was in Latin and was only used in Western churches, the Eastern Church didn't really notice the change until the 7th century. Patriarch Paul II of Constantinople accused Pope Theodore I of breaking a rule from 431, which stated that the Nicene Creed would never be changed or added to. Pope Theodore responded by excommunicating Paul II. This began a series of tit-for-tat condemnations. As soon as he took office, Theodore's successor, Pope Martin I, accused the Eastern Church of a different heresy (that Jesus Christ has just a single will, rather than a human will and a divine one). For this, the patriarch of Constantinople had him kidnapped, tortured and exiled.

There were several attempts by various members of the Church on both sides to patch up this rift. The disagreement was blamed on subtle mistranslations between the Greek and Latin versions of the Creed, and it was argued that the change was intended as a minor clarification, rather than a revision and so wasn't breaking the rules. But when Charlemagne became Holy Roman emperor in 800, the Franks were the most insistent voices in favour of the filioque because they were looking for excuses to accuse the Eastern Church of heresy. The filioque became such a hot potato that the Creed wasn't said at all in Latin mass from 795 to 1014.

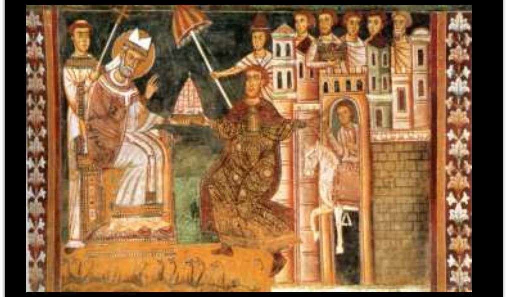
In the 1040s, the Normans began conquering southern Italy, which had been under Byzantine rule. The Normans replaced the Eastern bishops with Western ones of their own, and church

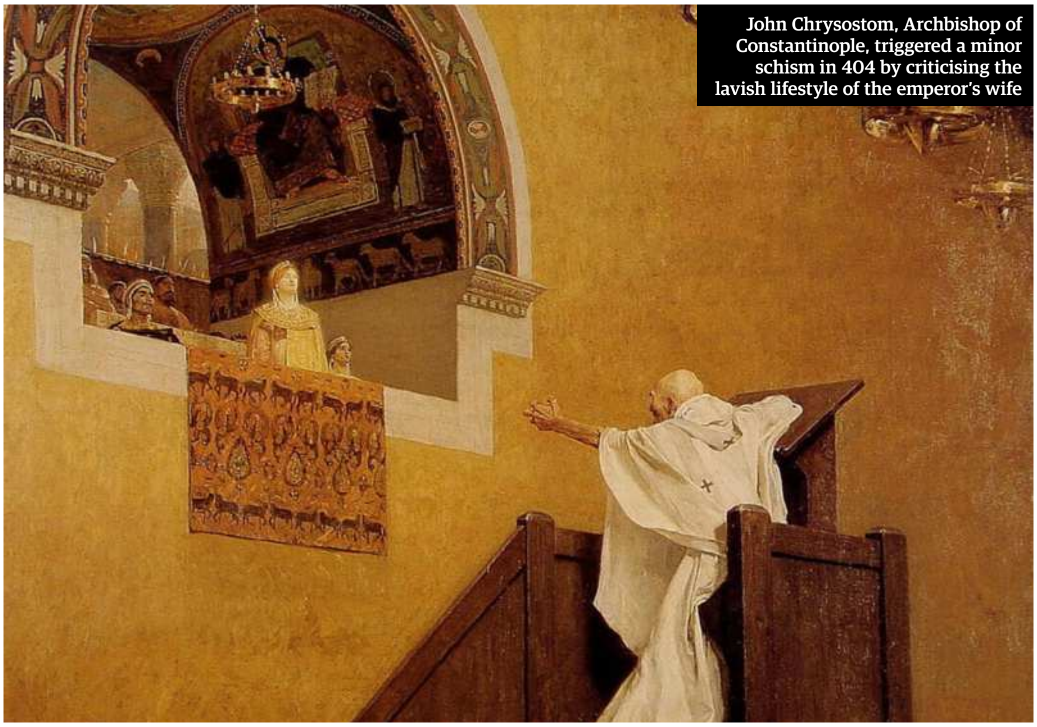
> For the first few centuries after Constantine, anyone living in the Byzantine world would still have called themselves Roman

The forgery that split the Church

When Pope Leo IX claimed supreme authority over all Christian churches in 1053, he justified it with a manuscript called *The Donation of Constantine*. This was a decree from Emperor Constantine I in the 4th century that granted the Pope of Rome supremacy over "Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Constantinople, as also over all the churches of God in the whole earth". This authority, in addition to significant landed estates in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, was supposedly in gratitude to Pope Sylvester I, who cured Constantine of leprosy. There was just one, teeny tiny problem: the manuscript was a fake. It was written in the 8th century for Pope Stephen II to strengthen his negotiations with Pepin the Short, who was the father of Charlemagne.

In the mid 15th century, scholars began to suspect the forgery and it was finally conclusively demonstrated by the Catholic priest Lorenzo Valla. He conducted an exhaustive study of the language used in the text and showed that it contained words and idioms that weren't used in any other 4th-century document. Valla considered that the anachronisms were so glaring, that the Church could not possibly have been ignorant of the deception. Modern scholars now think that Pope Leo IX probably did believe the authenticity of the document. And it is worth realising that Valla had his own conflict of interest, because he was employed by Alfonso V of Aragon, who was fighting a territorial dispute with the Papal States. The Catholic Church suppressed Valla's exposé for centuries, but eventually conceded the *Donation* was fake.


This 13th century fresco shows Emperor Constantine making the *Donation* to Pope Sylvester I


John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, triggered a minor schism in 404 by criticising the lavish lifestyle of the emperor's wife

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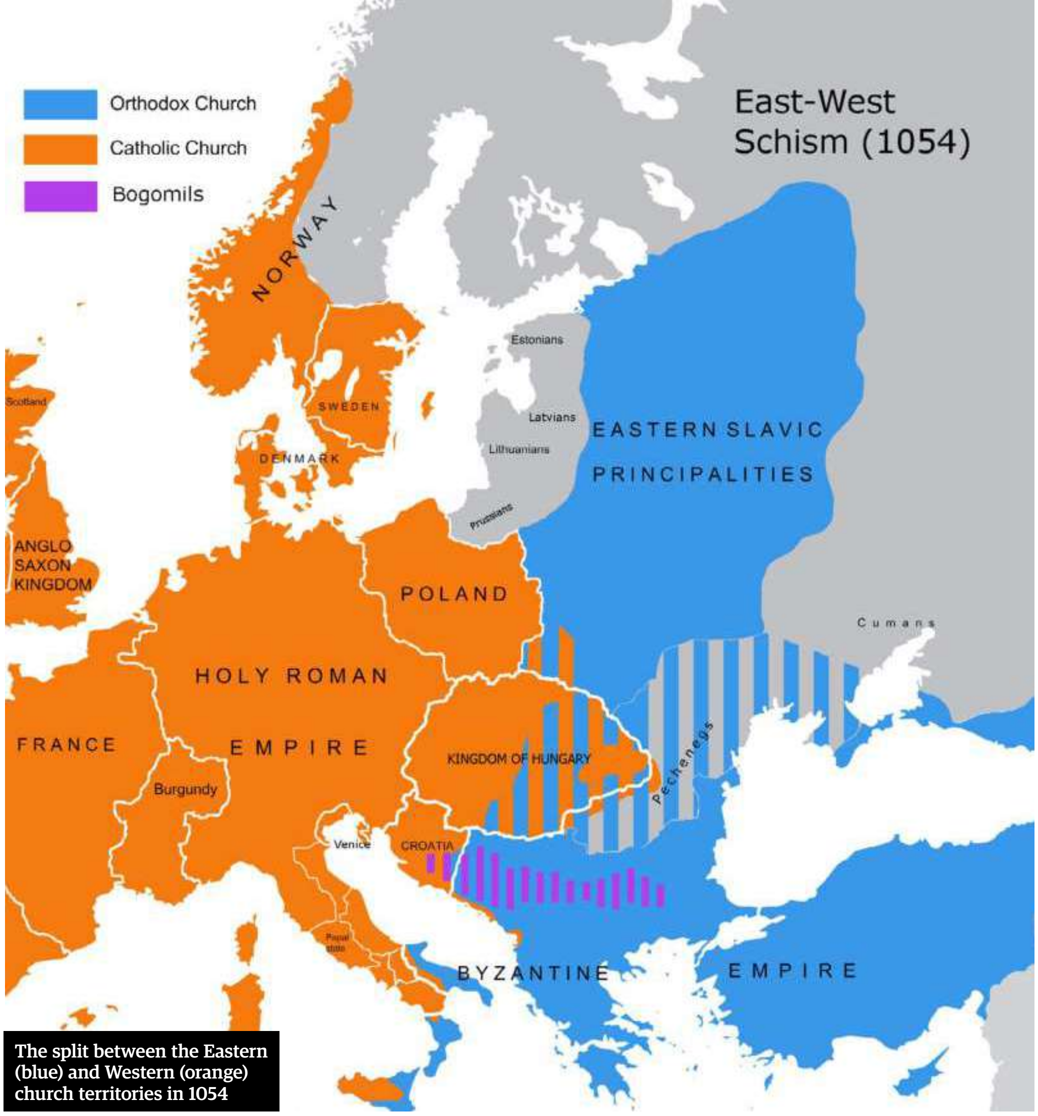
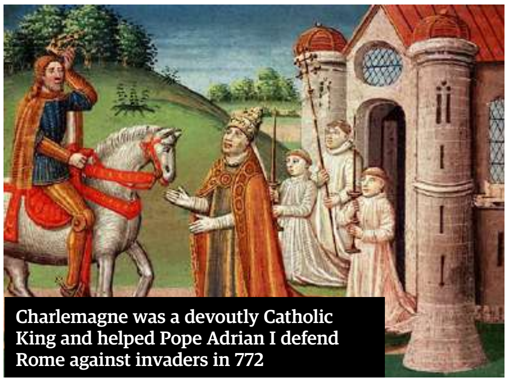

Orthodox Church
Catholic Church
Bogomils
East-West Schism (1054)
NORWAY
Estonians
Scotland
SWEDEN
Latvians
Lithuanians
EASTERN SLAVIC PRINCIPALITIES
DENMARK
Prussians
ANGLO SAXON KINGDOM
POLAND
Cumans
HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE
FRANCE
KINGDOM OF HUNGARY
Pechenegs
Burgundy
Venice
CROATIA
Papal State
BYZANTINE EMPIRE

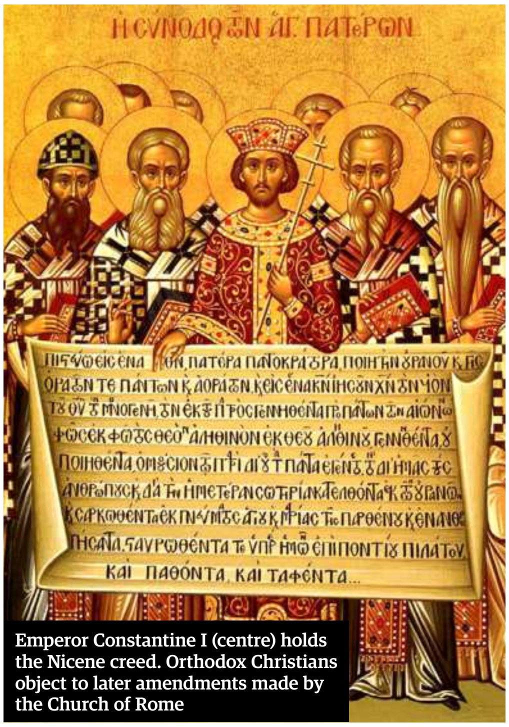
The split between the Eastern (blue) and Western (orange) church territories in 1054

An interrupted church service at Hagia Sophia sparked an argument that has lasted almost a thousand years

Bohemond of Taranto's brutal capture of Antioch during the First Crusade, increased the hostility between the Roman and Greek Churches



Charlemagne was a devoutly Catholic King and helped Pope Adrian I defend Rome against invaders in 772


Η ΣΥΝΟΔΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΑΓ. ΠΑΤΕΡΩΝ
ΚΑΙ ΠΑΘΟΝΤΑ, ΚΑΙ ΤΑΦΕΝΤΑ...

Emperor Constantine I (centre) holds the Nicene creed. Orthodox Christians object to later amendments made by the Church of Rome

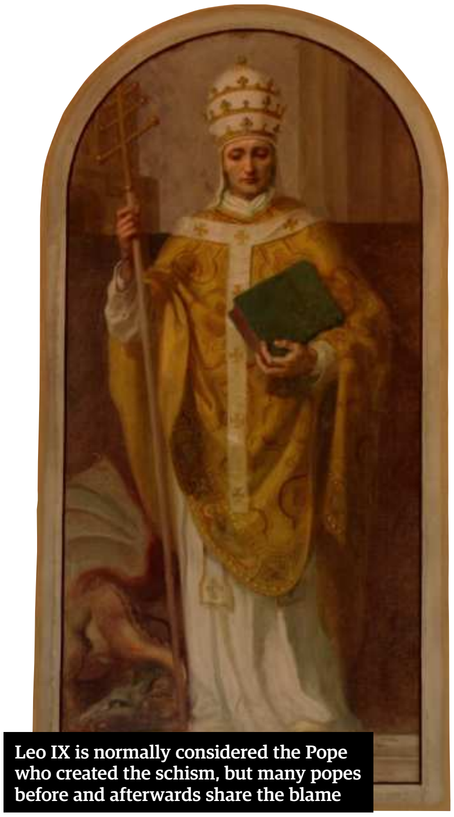
services abruptly changed from Greek to Latin. The liturgy, the proper fast days and even the kind of bread used for the Eucharist all changed, and the local populace were left bewildered. When they complained to the patriarch of Constantinople, who at this time was Michael Cerularius, he responded by closing all the Latin churches in Constantinople.

This just escalated the argument. In 1053, Patriarch Cerularius wrote an open letter, in Greek, to the Western bishop of Apulia in southern Italy, condemning their Latin practices. Cardinal Humbert of Candida Silva, who was adviser to the pope on matters of the Eastern Church, got hold of a copy of this letter, translated it into Latin and showed it to Pope Leo IX. The pope responded by writing an enormous 41-chapter letter, arguing he was the successor of the apostle Peter and hence had supreme authority over all Christians and their bishops. Humbert was put in charge of a papal legation to deliver this fiery letter to Patriarch Cerularius in Constantinople, but he was also given a much friendlier and more moderate letter to give to the Eastern emperor Constantine IX, in the hope of winning his sympathy. When Humbert arrived in Constantinople in 1054, he was welcomed warmly by the emperor, but his initial meeting with the patriarch immediately turned into a shouting match and Humbert stormed out of the palace. Michael Cerularius refused to meet with them again after that and the legation was left to fume in Constantinople for several months.

On 16 July 1054, Humbert had had enough. The legation marched into the cathedral of Hagia Sophia, in the middle of the service of Divine Liturgy. Humbert slapped a papal bull (a decree from the pope) on the High Altar, excommunicating Michael Cerularius. The cathedral was in uproar and as the news spread, riots broke out. Humbert and his legates barely managed to escape and shortly thereafter, a Byzantine synod excommunicated them all.

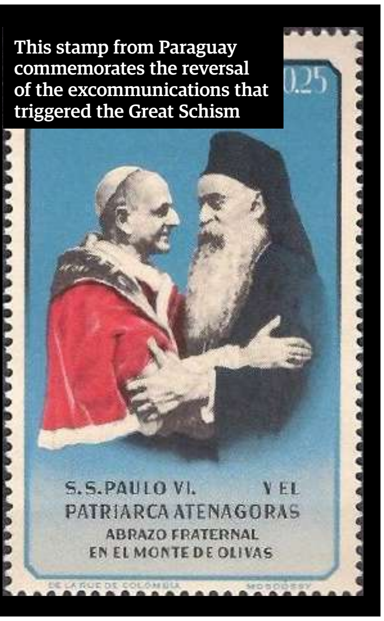
This momentous event is normally seen as the start of the formal schism between East and West. But for all their drama, the mutual excommunications were just posturing. For one thing, while Humbert was kept waiting in Constantinople, Pope Leo IX had died. The authority of a papal legation doesn't automatically transfer from one pope to the next, and in any case, the next pope (Victor II) wasn't elected for another year. So Humbert's bull of excommunication wasn't valid. And even if it had been, Humbert was only excommunicating Michael Cerularius, not the office of patriarch of Constantinople itself. Likewise the return-fire excommunications of Humbert and the other legates didn't extend to the pope; there wasn't one!

Today there are 250 million Orthodox Christians. They are the second largest Christian group, after Roman Catholicism


Leo IX is normally considered the Pope who created the schism, but many popes before and afterwards share the blame

Reconciliation hopes

In 1965, at the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI reversed the excommunications of 1054. Patriarch Athenagoras I did the same, at a simultaneous ceremony in Istanbul. This wasn't enough to end the schism but it did at least signal a desire to work towards reconciliation. There is already a group of churches in eastern Europe, called the Eastern Catholic Churches, that consider the schism healed. They began negotiations with the pope in the 13th century and were prepared to accept that the pope was the supreme head of the Church in return for concessions over the details of church traditions and services. Around 16 million Christians belong to the Eastern Catholic Churches – about six per cent of all Orthodox Christians. Unsurprisingly though, these churches have been criticised from both sides of the East-West schism. More recently, there has been a determined effort to find compromises. In 2004 at the Pallial mass in the Vatican, Pope Jean Paul II and Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople said the Creed together. They said it in Greek and it didn't include the filioque. This was the first time this had happened in over a thousand years and there is now a tacit understanding that when East and West patriarchs are together, the filioque will be left out.

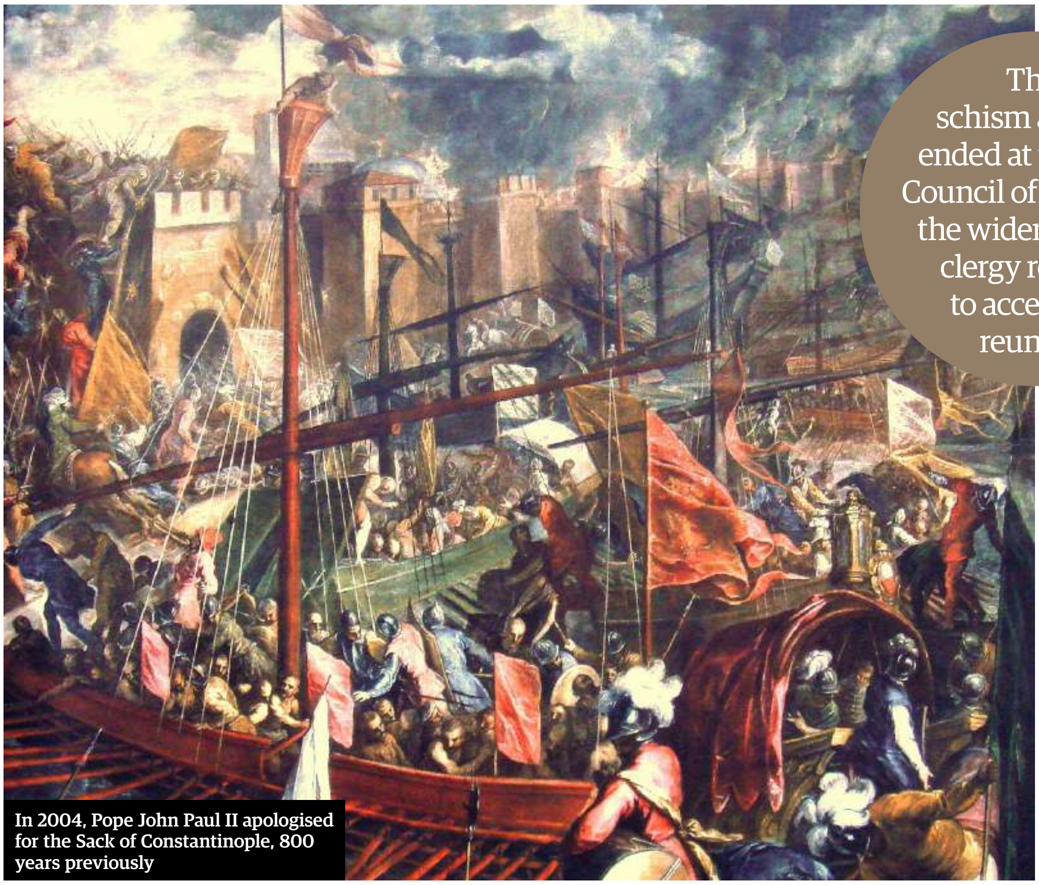

This stamp from Paraguay commemorates the reversal of the excommunications that triggered the Great Schism

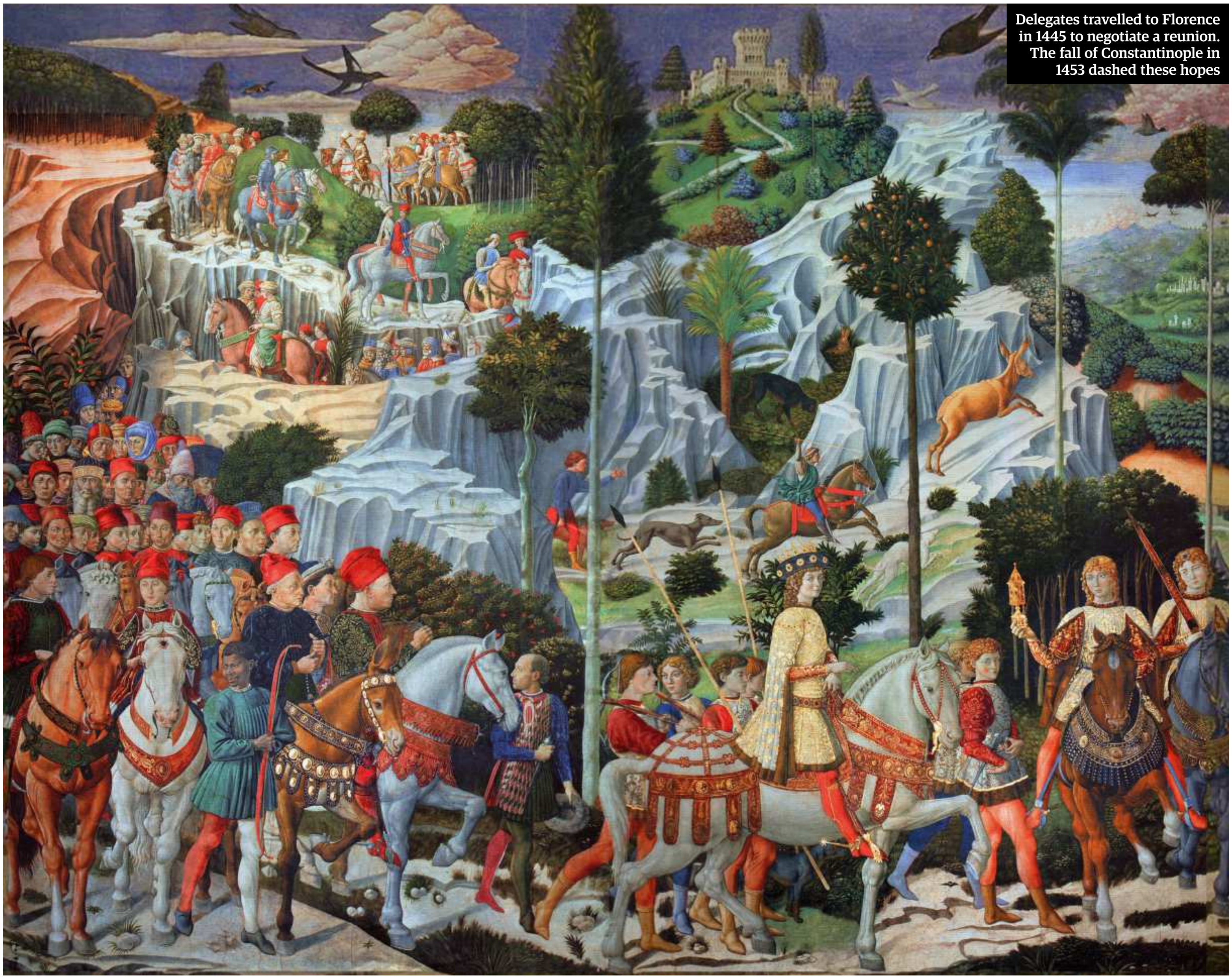
This spat doesn't seem any more serious than any of the other minor schisms, and yet, somehow, it stuck. So what was different? In the aftermath of the debacle at Hagia Sophia, it seems to be a straightforward clash of egos. We know news of the pope's death had already reached Constantinople, because Michael Cerularius mentioned it in his rebuttal to the bull of excommunication, but he seems not to have realised it meant Humbert had no authority. This didn't matter, because Patriarch Cerularius had no intention of patching up the row. His Church and his office had been insulted and he demanded retribution.

Unfortunately, Cerularius had less support from the other Eastern patriarchs than he expected. The patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem were both favourable to Rome and refused to join any attempts from Constantinople to whip up resentment against the West. This schism might have been quietly swept under the carpet after 50 years or so, like the others. But in 1095 Pope Urban II called for the first crusade against the Muslims in the Middle East. Ostensibly the purpose of this crusade was to restore Jerusalem to Christian rule, but in fact Pope Urban hoped to reunite the Christian Church – and place Rome at its head. The First Crusade did eventually recapture Jerusalem in 1099 (although Pope Urban died before news of the victory reached him). But far from reunifying the Church, it increased the rift between East and West. When the crusaders captured the city of Antioch, they massacred the Muslim inhabitants, but also many of the Byzantine Christians living there. The Eastern emperor Alexios failed to send troops to help the crusaders defend the city, because he had been told by Christian deserters that Antioch had already been recaptured. And then the leader of the crusading forces at Antioch, Bohemond of Taranto, used this supposed betrayal as justification to retain Antioch for himself, rather than return it to Byzantium, which was what had originally been agreed.

The schism almost ended at the 1274 Council of Lyon, but the wider Eastern clergy refused to accept the reunion

In short, the Great Schism was caused by misunderstanding and petty ambition, then perpetuated by more of the same. After Urban II, 12 successive popes failed to do anything to reunite the two sides and the cultural and ethnic differences between East and West continued to grow. In Constantinople, Greek and Latin communities lived together in an uneasy truce and in the 12th century, the Byzantine emperor Manuel I even married a Latin wife, Maria of Antioch. But when Manuel died in 1180, Maria took over as regent and immediately began favouring the Venetian merchants (who were Latin) living in Constantinople. After two years she was overthrown by the irate Greeks, and all 60,000 Latin inhabitants were massacred, sold as slaves or forced to flee. In 1185 it was the turn of the Byzantines when Norman knights invaded Greece and sacked the city of Thessalonica. More


In 2004, Pope John Paul II apologised for the Sack of Constantinople, 800 years previously



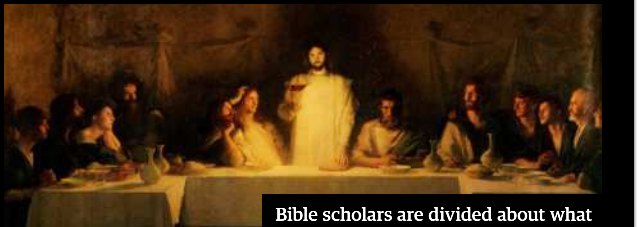
Delegates travelled to Florence in 1445 to negotiate a reunion. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 dashed these hopes

than 7,000 Greeks were killed, mostly civilians. Less than a decade later, the armies of the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople itself with even greater brutality. Over three days, thousands of civilians were killed, churches were looted, alters destroyed, nuns raped and artwork stolen.

Today, the differences between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches can seem bafflingly petty. The doctrinal differences between the Protestant and Catholic traditions are much wider, and yet these Churches have been more active in seeking common ground. But the doctrinal differences are just the lingering echoes of a much more fundamental estrangement. Even the terrible massacres at Thessalonica and Constantinople weren't the cause of the Great Schism, so much as a symptom of it. By adopting different languages and customs, the two sides allowed themselves to grow apart. But by worshipping the same God, they brought themselves into conflict.

When yeast meets West

One of the points of contention between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches concerns the kind of bread used in the Eucharist ceremony. In the West, it became customary to use unleavened bread for communion, on the assumption that this was the kind of bread Jesus was most likely to have eaten at the Last Supper. The Orthodox view was that unleavened bread was associated with Judaism and so they opted for leavened bread in church services as a way of distancing themselves from Jewish practices. In the 11th century, this minor detail was used as wedge to divide the two Churches and various eloquent justifications were written to describe how the yeast represents the risen Christ. Catholics were referred to as 'azymites' (from the Greek words meaning 'without yeast') by the Orthodox Christians, while the Catholics responded by calling Eastern Christians 'fermentarians'. Patriarch Michael Cerularius claimed that the flour and water communion wafers used by the Franks weren't bread at all and could therefore only symbolise a soulless Christ. By the 15th century, the Orthodox Church had admitted that either kind of bread was acceptable but the custom has proved hard to shake and Eastern churches mostly still use leavened bread.



Bible scholars are divided about what was eaten at the Last Supper, but it probably wasn't communion wafers

Crusading to liberate the Holy Land

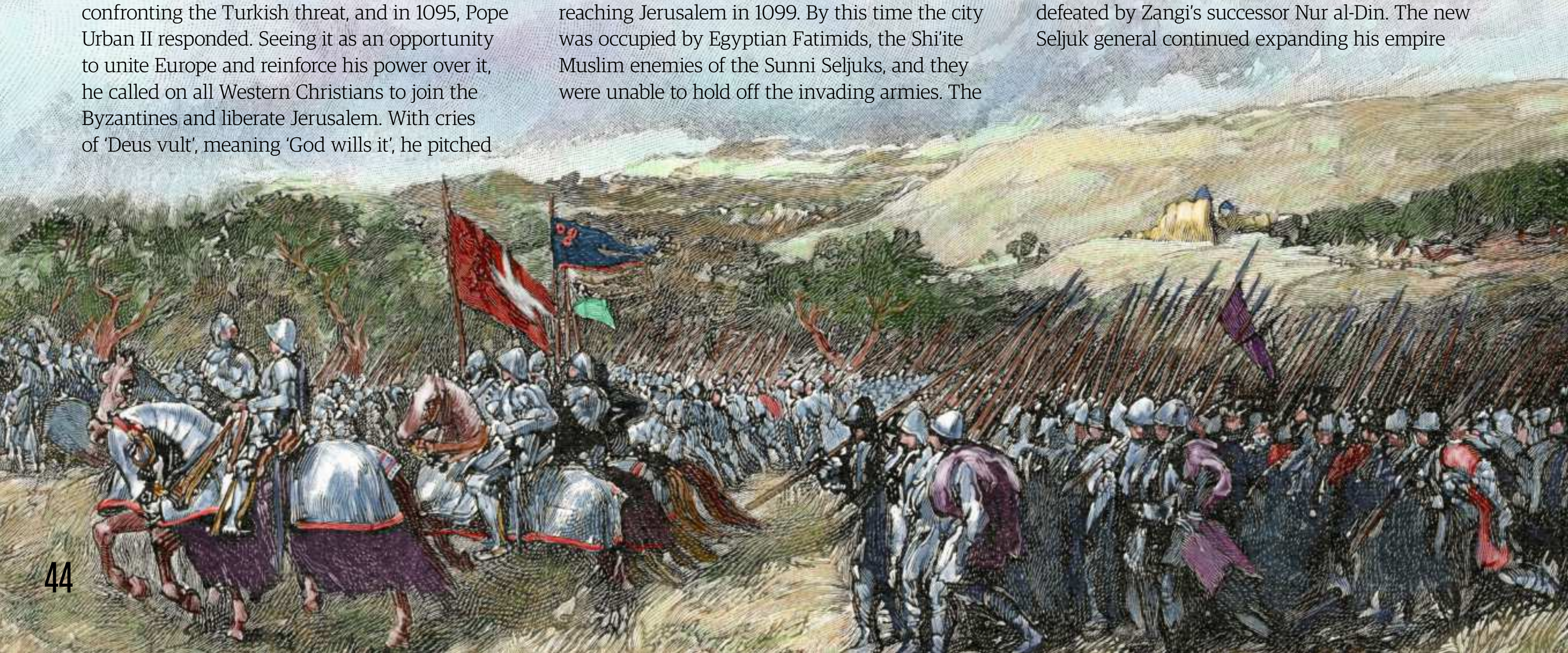
The military expeditions of European Christians against Muslims in the Middle East changed the Western world forever and left a legacy of bitterness in their wake

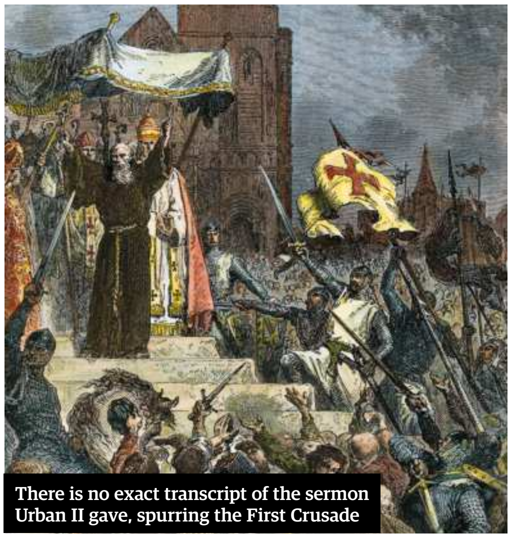
With tales of brave and noble warriors heralded as Christian heroes, the story of the Crusades has been greatly romanticised by the West, but in reality, the wars they waged against the Muslims living in the Holy Land were extremely ruthless, bloody and ultimately unsuccessful.

They began towards the end of the 11th century, when the Muslim Seljuk Turks had invaded much of the Christian Byzantine Empire and sacked the holy cities, threatening to take the capital of Constantinople next. They had also taken the holy city of Jerusalem, an important place for both faiths, and made it difficult for Christians to make their pilgrimages there. In response, Byzantine Emperor Alexius I asked the West for help in confronting the Turkish threat, and in 1095, Pope Urban II responded. Seeing it as an opportunity to unite Europe and reinforce his power over it, he called on all Western Christians to join the Byzantines and liberate Jerusalem. With cries of 'Deus vult', meaning 'God wills it', he pitched the First Crusade as more of a pilgrimage than a military operation and promised all those who participated they would be forgiven for their sins. More than 60,000 people answered his call, the majority being ordinary peasants untrained in combat, and showed that they had 'taken the cross' by adorning their clothing in red crosses.

An unorganised band of knights and commoners were the first to set off, being led by popular preacher Peter the Hermit, but this 'People's Crusade' was soon crushed by the Turks. Another group of Crusaders then set off, led by Count Emicho, but caused widespread outrage by massacring Jews along the way. Finally, the four main armies of Crusaders launched their attack, taking the cities of Nicea and Antioch before finally reaching Jerusalem in 1099. By this time the city was occupied by Egyptian Fatimids, the Shi'ite Muslim enemies of the Sunni Seljuks, and they were unable to hold off the invading armies. The Crusaders took over two sacred Muslim buildings, the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, and massacred hundreds of men, women and children to take back the city.

With their objective achieved, many of the crusaders returned home, but those who remained established four Latin Christian states in Jerusalem, Edessa, Antioch and Tripoli. They held these for more than four decades until in 1144 the governor of Mosul, Seljuk general Zangi, captured Edessa. The news shocked Europe and prompted Pope Eugenius III to call for a Second Crusade, but the success of the first proved difficult to repeat. Both King Louis VII of France and King Conrad III of Germany led Crusaders to attack the Syrian stronghold of Damascus and were defeated by Zangi's successor Nur al-Din. The new Seljuk general continued expanding his empire




There is no exact transcript of the sermon Urban II gave, spurring the First Crusade

until his death in 1174, at which point Egyptian sultan Saladin assumed control. His campaign of conquests led him to recapture Jerusalem in 1187. Pope Urban III was said to have died of a heart attack upon hearing of the defeat and his successor, Gregory VIII, then called for a Third Crusade. One of the rulers who answered the call was Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, but he drowned on the crossing to Syria and much of his army died of sickness soon after. This left it up to King Phillip II of France and King Richard I of England to take up the fight, and they arrived at the port of Acre in 1191. After a two-year long siege, the city surrendered and Phillip returned home, leaving Richard to march on to Jerusalem. He made two attempts to capture the city but soon realised that he lacked the resources to defend it even if he was successful and so signed a peace treaty with Saladin instead. This allowed the Christians unfettered access to Jerusalem but left the city under Muslim control.

At the beginning of the 13th century, Pope Innocent III called for a Fourth Crusade in an attempt to unite Western and Eastern Christians under his control. The Venetians agreed to build a fleet of ships to transport the Crusaders into battle, but insufficient numbers arrived in Venice to pay for them. To settle their debts, the Crusaders struck a deal, agreeing to help the Venetians capture the rebellious city of Zara in exchange for passage to Anatolia. However, as Zara was a Christian city, the Pope was appalled by their actions and excommunicated all involved. Still lacking funds, the Catholic Crusaders then accepted a deal from would-be Orthodox Byzantine Emperor Alexius III, who offered to pay them if they helped him take Constantinople. They succeeded, but when Alexius failed to produce their money, they decided that they would take the city for themselves. What followed was a bloody battle that saw Christians fighting Christians and the near-destruction of the largest city in Christendom, all of which meant the Crusaders never made it to their intended destination of Jerusalem.

From then on, the Crusades became less about reclaiming the Holy Land from the Muslims and more about battling any enemies of the Catholic Church. A Children's Crusade in 1212 saw an army of young people set off from Europe only to be kidnapped and sold as slaves, and the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Crusades all failed to achieve their objectives. In 1291, the last remaining Crusader-held city, Acre, fell to the Muslims, marking the end of this tumultuous period in religious history.

> "What followed was a bloody battle that saw Christians fighting Christians"

The Knights Hospitaller

Before the First Crusade, a group of monks established a hospital in Jerusalem on the site of the Saint John the Baptist monastery. There they took care of the sick and injured Christian pilgrims who had travelled to the Holy Land, using very advanced medical techniques for their day. When the Crusaders arrived in 1095, a group of knights joined the monks and they took on a more military role. In 1113, the Knights Hospitaller of the Order of St John was officially recognised in a papal bull issued by Pope Paschal II and they continued to care for the sick while also defending the Crusader kingdom. Along with the Knights Templar, they were one of the most formidable military orders in the Holy Land. After the Muslims recaptured Jerusalem in 1187, the Knights Hospitaller moved around Europe, becoming rulers of Rhodes, then Malta and patrolling the Mediterranean with their ships. After defeating the Ottoman Turks in the infamous Great Siege of Malta, they then began to focus more on medical care than warfare but were driven out by Napoleon in 1798. From there the Order dispersed throughout Europe and Russia and since 1834 has been based in Rome as a Christian charity dedicated to helping the sick and poor.

Richard the Lionheart's crusade

Born to royalty but educated in the charnel gutter of war, King Richard brought the religious fanaticism of the Christian West on the Muslim East in a quest to claim the fabled Holy Land

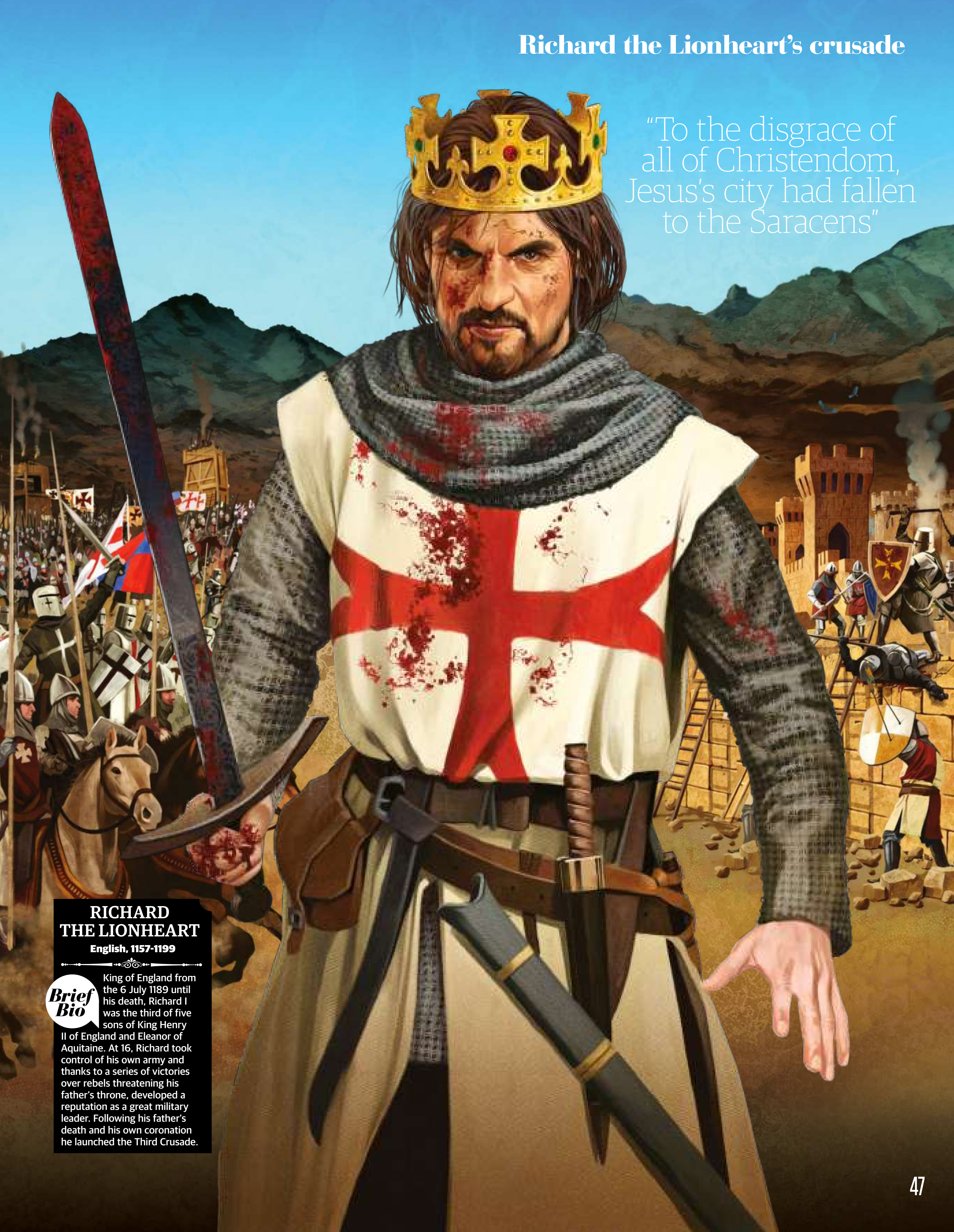
For almost a year the mighty city of Acre held firm. Despite wave after wave of Christian knights pouring all their religious fervour and military might into its ancient walls, it had held back the tide and somehow halted the progress of the foreign hordes that now threatened to overrun the entire Near East.

More and more men came, though - the attacks were relentless. When the first army had been held at bay, the city's inhabitants thought they were safe, that the invasion was defeated. However, then yet another army landed and the city's main artery, its port, which provided passage in and out of its walls, was taken. The city's defences were tested once more, with an even more ferocious attack battering at the doors and calling for blood. Luckily for those within, once more the city held off the mass of warriors, its infidel leaders repelled.

Then, with the new year's sailing season, another invader arrived by sea with a fresh bloodthirsty army. He was followed in May by yet another, with tens of thousands of soldiers joining the infidels' camp outside the walls, swelling their numbers to terrifying proportions. They attacked again and the losses on both sides were massive. The lack of food and supplies in the city, and the spread of disease within the invaders' camp drove both sets of warriors to extremes, stoking the fires of faith that lay within their hearts to pursue bolder and bolder acts of violence.

Today is the eighth day of June 1191 and, as Acre slowly suffocates in the oppressive heat of the Levant's summer months, yet another fleet is landing in the city's once-prosperous port, this time with one of the biggest forces the city has ever seen. If the ruler of Acre, the noble and great Saladin, doesn't send meaningful reinforcements soon, then the city will fall and the gates to the Holy Land will be brutally wrenched open to the Christian hordes.

They call this one, this man-mountain stepping off his ship onto the dusty dry shore, the Lionheart, and he is here to kill them all in the name of his god and glory. The passage had been long and painful, featuring storms, shipwrecks and a mad despot who threatened to derail the Third Crusade before it had even begun. No matter, King Richard the Lionheart and his army had survived the trip across the Mediterranean Sea and reached the Holy Land. After months of pursuit and planning, they were primed to fulfil their mission, Richard's mission, God's mission, to take the Holy Land by storm and cut a direct path to the holiest of all cities, Jerusalem.



"To the disgrace of all of Christendom, Jesus's city had fallen to the Saracens"

RICHARD THE LIONHEART

English, 1157-1199

Brief Bio

King of England from the 6 July 1189 until his death, Richard I was the third of five sons of King Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine. At 16, Richard took control of his own army and thanks to a series of victories over rebels threatening his father's throne, developed a reputation as a great military leader. Following his father's death and his own coronation he launched the Third Crusade.

Battle of Arsuf

A major battle in the Third Crusade, Arsuf saw Richard and Saladin face off

CRUSADERS

NUMBER OF TROOPS:
20,000

LEADER

RICHARD THE LIONHEART

Excellent on the battlefield, Richard the Lionheart was a brutal killer and a gifted tactical thinker, leading an army of religious fanatics with ruthless efficiency.

Strength Amazing warrior and powerful military leader.

Weakness Politically and economically reckless as king.

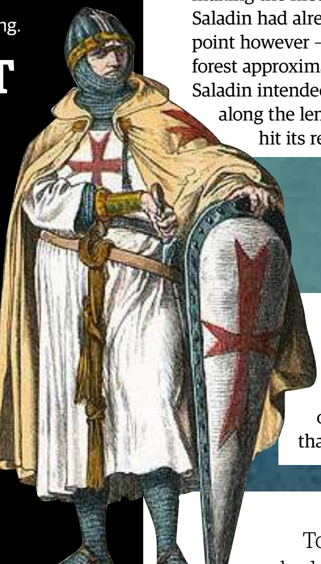
KEY UNIT

TEMPLAR KNIGHT

The most skilled Christian fighting unit to take part in the Third Crusade, the Knights Templar were wealthy, well-trained and fanatical fighters, driven by a holy purpose.

Strength Well-equipped and trained in hand-to-hand combat.

Weakness Few in number and fanatically religious, leading to recklessness.



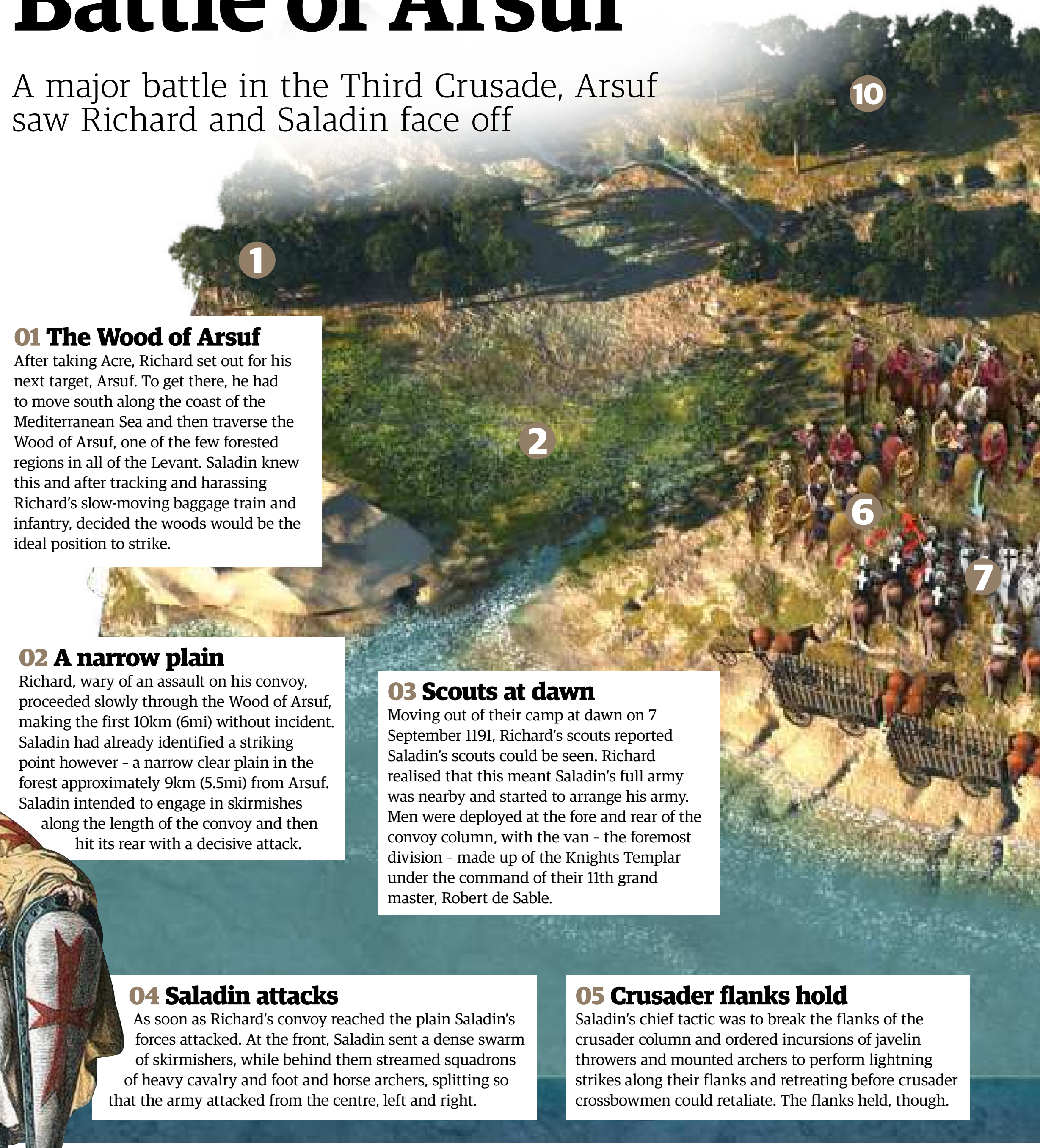
KEY WEAPON

BROADSWORD

The most popular hand-to-hand weapon of all Christian knight orders, including the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller, the broadsword was a well-balanced and deadly weapon capable of stabbing and cleaving.

Strength Great all-round weapon that also allowed shield use.

Weakness Could be out-ranged with two-handed swords and spears.



01 The Wood of Arsuf

After taking Acre, Richard set out for his next target, Arsuf. To get there, he had to move south along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea and then traverse the Wood of Arsuf, one of the few forested regions in all of the Levant. Saladin knew this and after tracking and harassing Richard's slow-moving baggage train and infantry, decided the woods would be the ideal position to strike.

02 A narrow plain

Richard, wary of an assault on his convoy, proceeded slowly through the Wood of Arsuf, making the first 10km (6mi) without incident. Saladin had already identified a striking point however – a narrow clear plain in the forest approximately 9km (5.5mi) from Arsuf. Saladin intended to engage in skirmishes along the length of the convoy and then hit its rear with a decisive attack.

03 Scouts at dawn

Moving out of their camp at dawn on 7 September 1191, Richard's scouts reported Saladin's scouts could be seen. Richard realised that this meant Saladin's full army was nearby and started to arrange his army. Men were deployed at the fore and rear of the convoy column, with the van – the foremost division – made up of the Knights Templar under the command of their 11th grand master, Robert de Sable.

04 Saladin attacks

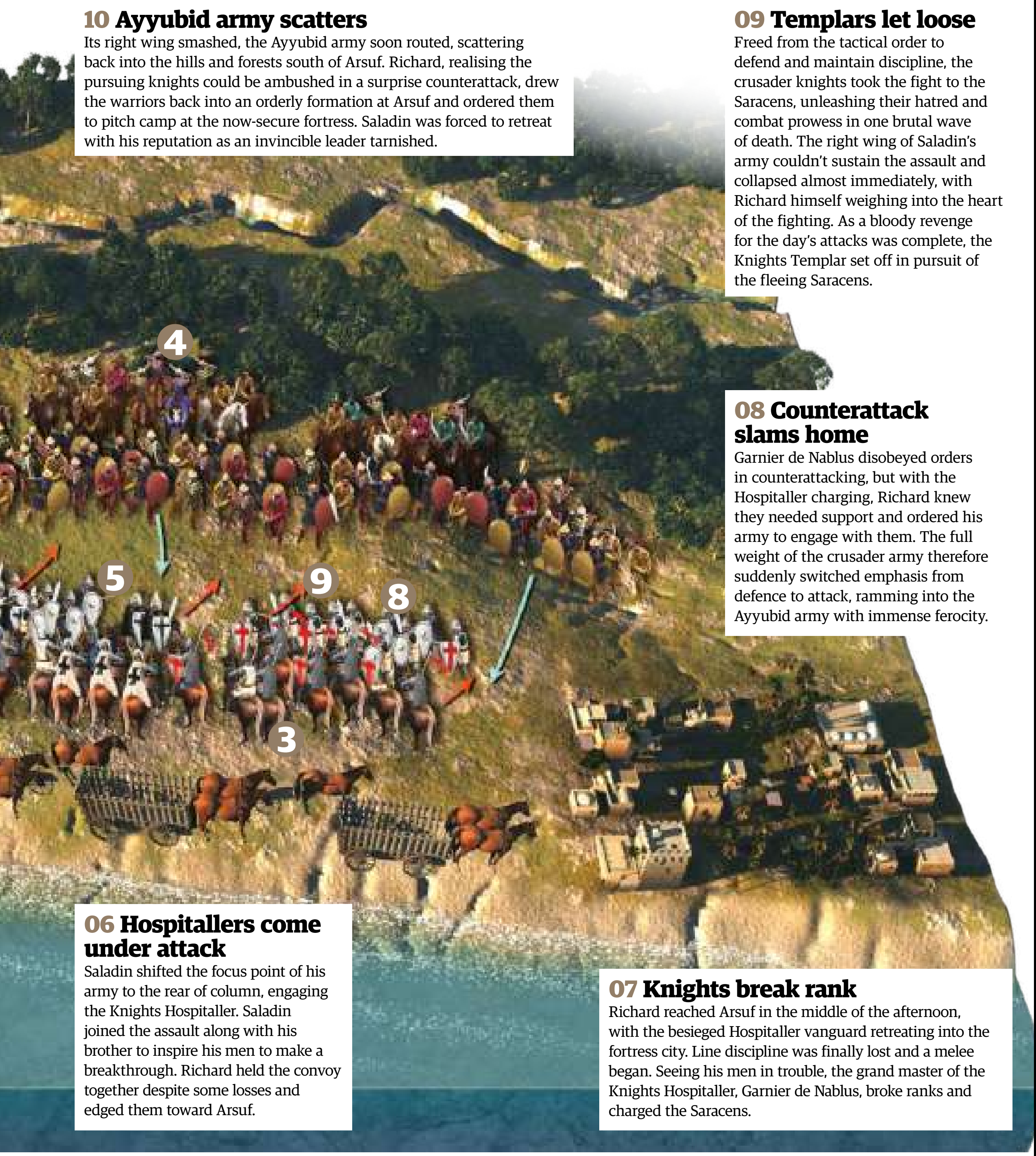
As soon as Richard's convoy reached the plain Saladin's forces attacked. At the front, Saladin sent a dense swarm of skirmishers, while behind them streamed squadrons of heavy cavalry and foot and horse archers, splitting so that the army attacked from the centre, left and right.

05 Crusader flanks hold

Saladin's chief tactic was to break the flanks of the crusader column and ordered incursions of javelin throwers and mounted archers to perform lightning strikes along their flanks and retreating before crusader crossbowmen could retaliate. The flanks held, though.

To the disgrace of all of Christendom, Jesus's city had fallen four years previous to the Saracen Ayyubid hordes, which was now not only ruled by Christianity's arch-nemesis Saladin, but also defiled by their very presence within its hallowed walls. The city, which had been safely held in Christian hands for almost 100 years since the First Crusade had established the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1099, had been ordered to be retaken by none other than the Pope in Rome. Richard, a devout and deeply religious king, had heeded the call. Here he now stood, ready to do his duty to the one true god. Conquering Acre was merely the first step in wrestling Jerusalem from Saladin's grip. So far the city's capture and wider crusade had been in the hands of a number of other leaders. These included Guy of Lusignan – a proud Poitevin knight and the supposed rightful king of Jerusalem through his marriage to Sibylla of Jerusalem – and King Philip II of France, who had helped raise the 'Saladin tithe' to pay for the crusade. The Duke of Austria, Leopold V, had overall command of the imperial forces. There had been yet more leaders at the siege's instigation the summer previous

Counter seal (1195) of Richard I of England



06 Hospitallers come under attack

Saladin shifted the focus point of his army to the rear of column, engaging the Knights Hospitaller. Saladin joined the assault along with his brother to inspire his men to make a breakthrough. Richard held the convoy together despite some losses and edged them toward Arsuf.

07 Knights break rank

Richard reached Arsuf in the middle of the afternoon, with the besieged Hospitaller vanguard retreating into the fortress city. Line discipline was finally lost and a melee began. Seeing his men in trouble, the grand master of the Knights Hospitaller, Garnier de Nablus, broke ranks and charged the Saracens.

08 Counterattack slams home

Garnier de Nablus disobeyed orders in counterattacking, but with the Hospitaller charging, Richard knew they needed support and ordered his army to engage with them. The full weight of the crusader army therefore suddenly switched emphasis from defence to attack, ramming into the Ayyubid army with immense ferocity.

09 Templars let loose

Freed from the tactical order to defend and maintain discipline, the crusader knights took the fight to the Saracens, unleashing their hatred and combat prowess in one brutal wave of death. The right wing of Saladin's army couldn't sustain the assault and collapsed almost immediately, with Richard himself weighing into the heart of the fighting. As a bloody revenge for the day's attacks was complete, the Knights Templar set off in pursuit of the fleeing Saracens.

10 Ayyubid army scatters

Its right wing smashed, the Ayyubid army soon routed, scattering back into the hills and forests south of Arsuf. Richard, realising the pursuing knights could be ambushed in a surprise counterattack, drew the warriors back into an orderly formation at Arsuf and ordered them to pitch camp at the now-secure fortress. Saladin was forced to retreat with his reputation as an invincible leader tarnished.

but illness and disease had claimed many over the winter months, with Frederick of Swabia and even the holy Patriarch Heraclius of Jerusalem all passing from this mortal world into the next.

The siege itself had stalled, so every passing week threatened to allow Saladin to outmanoeuvre the crusaders. Richard, being the experienced military leader that he was, realised this and after meeting with the other leaders, gave orders for vast siege engines to be built. These engines, these machines of death, once completed, towered over the Christian knights and, when unleashed, brought the siege into a deadly endgame.

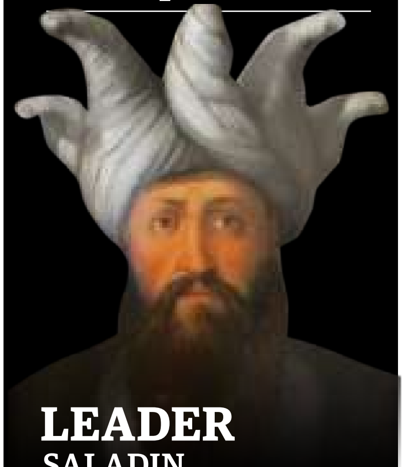
Colossal boulders rained down upon Acre's walls, smashing against them with thunderous brutality. Corpses of animals and Muslim soldiers littered the city's streets, spreading disease and sapping the morale of the terrified residents. Most fearsome of all though, flaming balls and arrows set ablaze anything that wasn't made out of stone, causing panic to quickly spread among Acre's populace. The surviving Muslim soldiers defended bravely, but the sheer carnage and chaos the machines and men of war now levied on the city was too much and, after a month of death and destruction, the remaining Muslim garrison within the city surrendered, which was a direct violation of Saladin's orders.

On receiving the news of Acre's fall, Saladin immediately set out for the city. On his way he received news that Richard had taken the

MUSLIMS

NUMBER OF TROOPS:

25,000



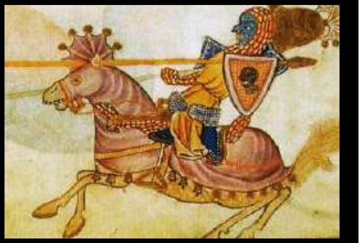
LEADER

SALADIN

He attained his exalted position as leader of the Ayyubid army and founder of the Ayyubid dynasty and was a wise and experienced military commander.

Strength Respected tactical thinker and powerful politician.

Weakness Hands-off leader with little personal combat prowess.



KEY UNIT

MOUNTED ARCHER

The light cavalry of Saladin was feared throughout the world due to its ability to strike quickly and at range, with skilled marksmen riding the world's fastest horses.

Strength Fast units that excelled in ambush and hit-and-run attacks.

Weakness Easily cut down by knights in hand-to-hand combat.

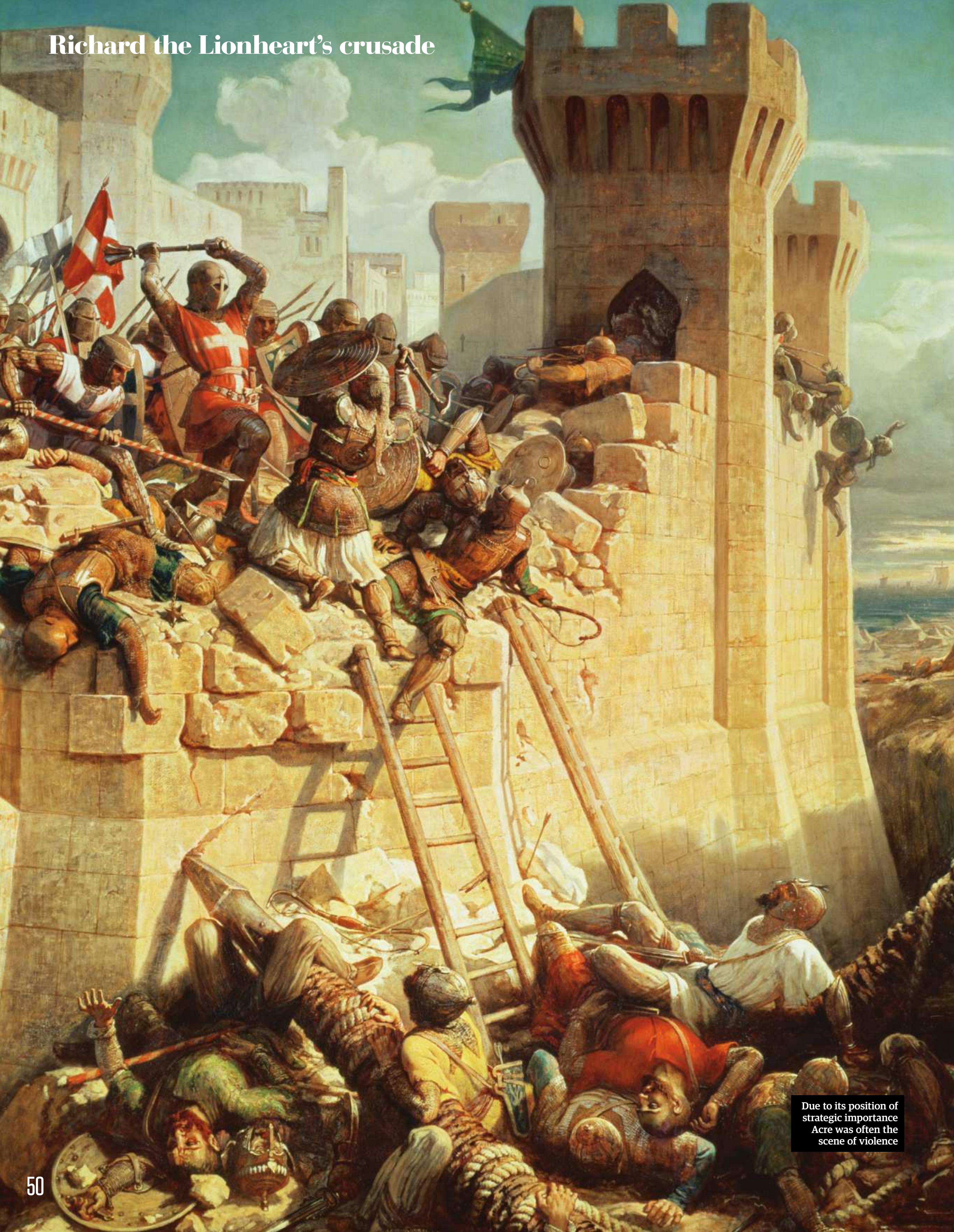
KEY WEAPON

SHORT BOW

Saladin's mamluk infantry and his light cavalry units excelled in bowmanship, with their short bows used to swarm arrows on crusader forces at every opportunity.

Strengths Fast to fire and reload with good stopping power.

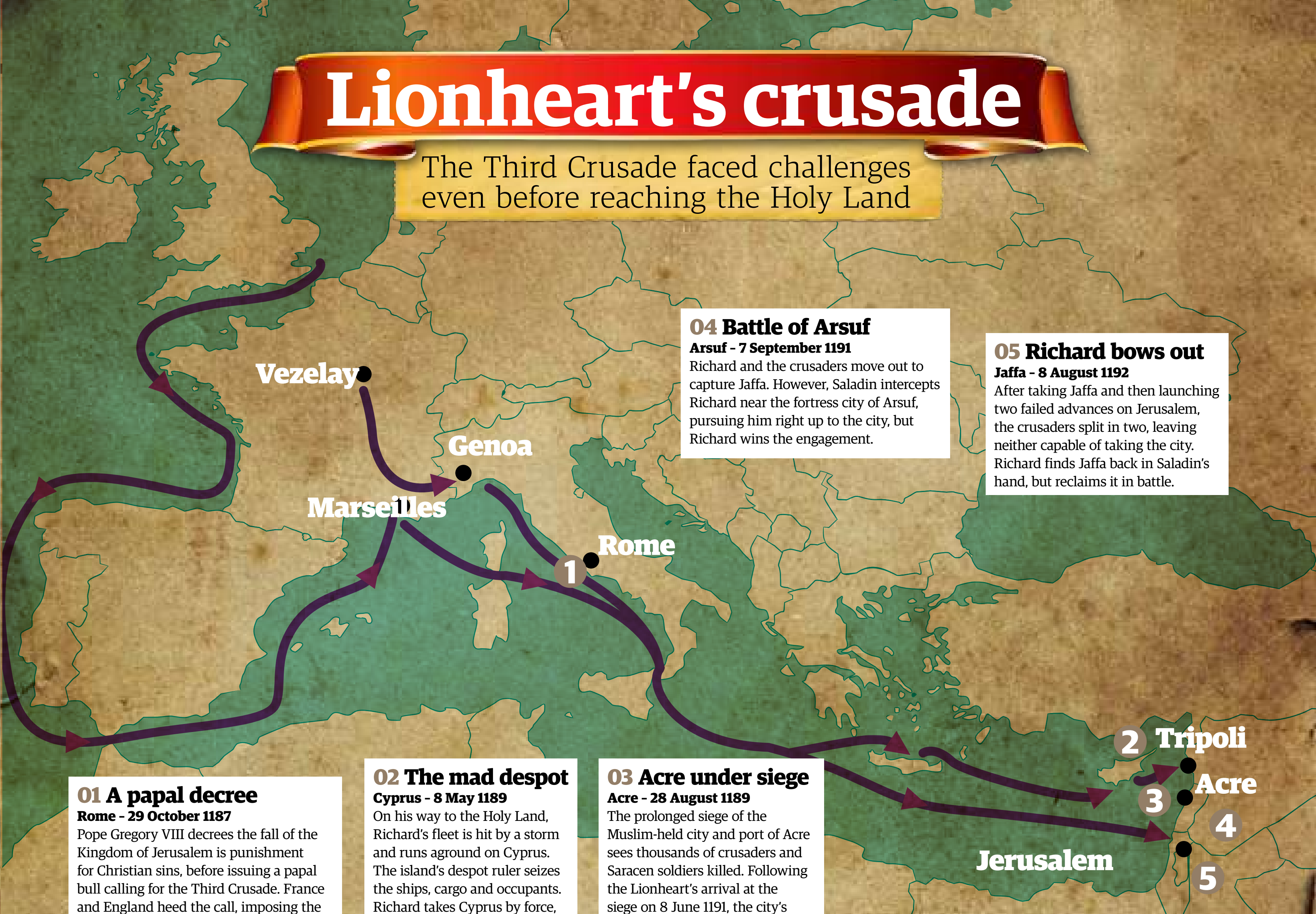
Weakness Could be outranged by the longbow and all-but-useless in hand-to-hand combat.



Due to its position of strategic importance Acre was often the scene of violence

Lionheart's crusade

The Third Crusade faced challenges even before reaching the Holy Land



01 A papal decree

Rome – 29 October 1187

Pope Gregory VIII decrees the fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem is punishment for Christian sins, before issuing a papal bull calling for the Third Crusade. France and England heed the call, imposing the 'Saladin tithe' to fund the mission.

02 The mad despot

Cyprus – 8 May 1189

On his way to the Holy Land, Richard's fleet is hit by a storm and runs aground on Cyprus. The island's despot ruler seizes the ships, cargo and occupants. Richard takes Cyprus by force, freeing the enslaved subjects.

03 Acre under siege

Acre – 28 August 1189

The prolonged siege of the Muslim-held city and port of Acre sees thousands of crusaders and Saracen soldiers killed. Following the Lionheart's arrival at the siege on 8 June 1191, the city's prolonged defence falters.

04 Battle of Arsuf

Arsuf – 7 September 1191

Richard and the crusaders move out to capture Jaffa. However, Saladin intercepts Richard near the fortress city of Arsuf, pursuing him right up to the city, but Richard wins the engagement.

05 Richard bows out

Jaffa – 8 August 1192

After taking Jaffa and then launching two failed advances on Jerusalem, the crusaders split in two, leaving neither capable of taking the city. Richard finds Jaffa back in Saladin's hand, but reclaims it in battle.

> "They call this one the Lionheart and he is here to kill them all in the name of his god and glory"

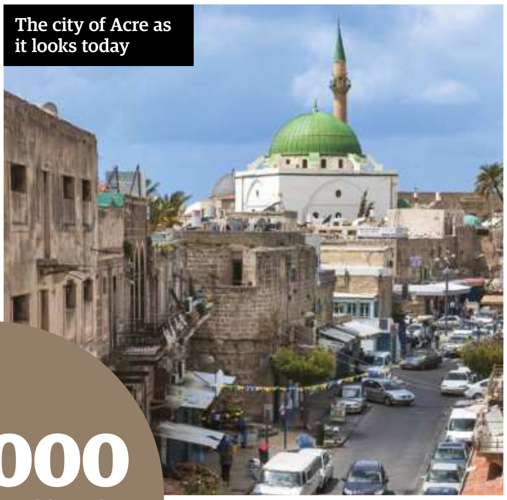
surrendering Muslim garrison of 2,400 men captive and was offering their return for a ransom. Saladin, known for his loyalty to his men and his wisdom, agreed to the ransom, which not only included monetary compensation but also the release of all of his Christian prisoners.

In Acre the banners of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, France, England and the Duchy of Austria fluttered in the light breeze. With Acre down, Richard knew that only the city of Jaffa to the south stood in their way of making a direct assault on Jerusalem, so he began making preparations for the continued crusade, as well as for the reparation of the sacked city. These preparations were swiftly interrupted by an argument that developed between the conquering leaders as to how the city should be divided up and to how the spoils of their victory should be apportioned. This quarrelling led Richard to strike down the Austrian standard from above the city's walls, slighting Leopold, as the king of England sided with Guy of Lusignan rather than Philip and Leopold over who should become king of Jerusalem when the city was taken. Philip and Leopold preferred fellow crusader and Italian nobleman Conrad of Montferrat, with Phillip so angry he threatened to return to Europe.

This cauldron of scheming and disagreement was tipped over the edge when Saladin delayed in paying the garrison's ransom. An already irate and disgruntled Richard deemed the lateness a massive slight and ordered every single member of the garrison to be executed. Saladin reached the city just as the decision was made, but could only watch as man after man was publicly executed, their heads lopped from their shoulders atop the city walls. Thousands died. The enraged Saladin replied like-for-like, executing the 1,000 Christian prisoners in his custody. Whatever deal could conceivably have been reached between the rival leaders now lay in ruins, seemingly as dead as the unfortunate prisoners.

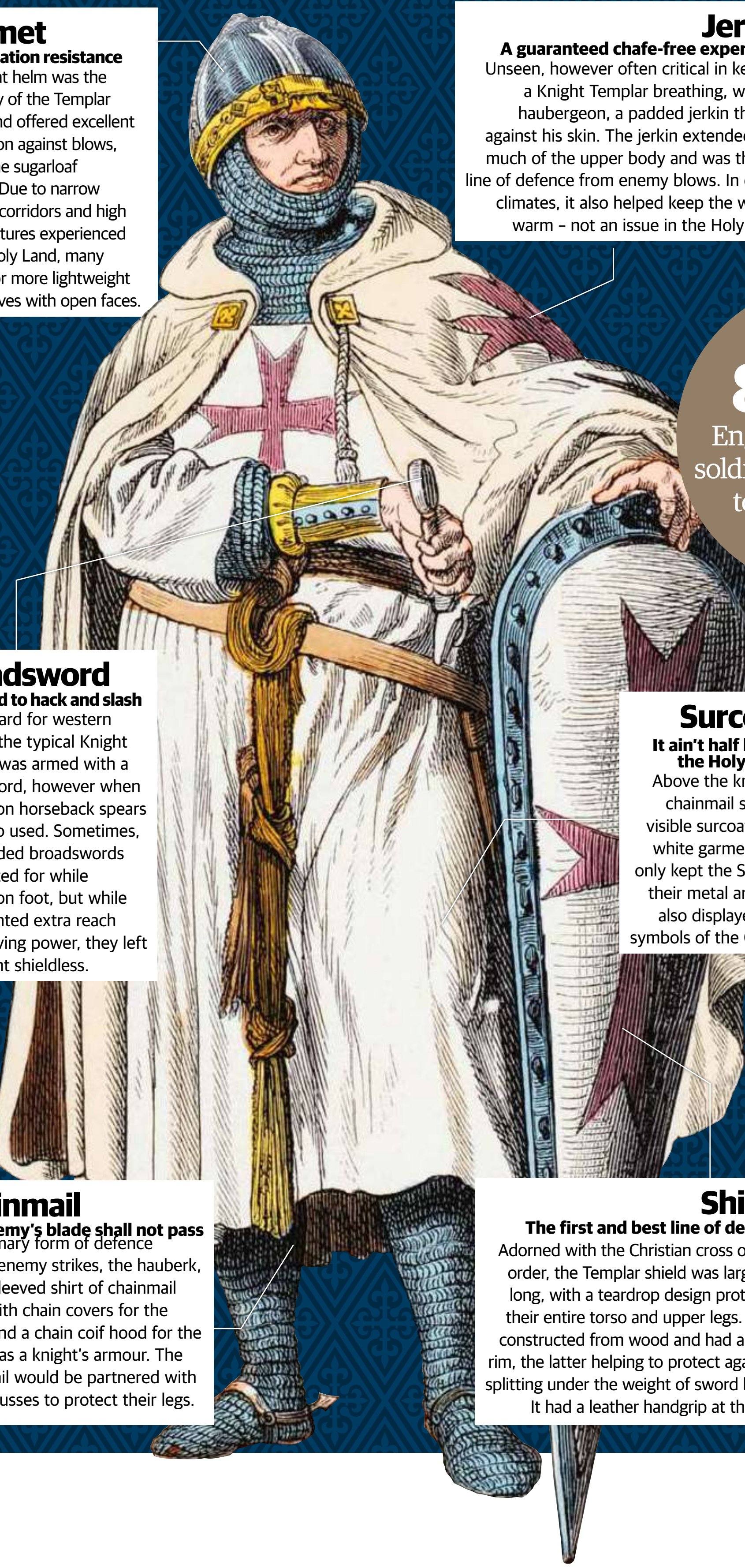
Angered and frustrated with Richard and Guy, Philip and Leopold finally decided that their participation in the Third Crusade was at an end, leaving in late August for their European homes. For Richard, though, such betrayal of faith was unimaginable, and after calling on the Philip to do

£70,000
Amount raised by the 'Saladin tithe' to fund the Third Crusade


The city of Acre as it looks today

Anatomy of a Templar knight

The key kit and weapons carried by the most elite of Christian warriors



Helmet

Decapitation resistance

The great helm was the mainstay of the Templar Order and offered excellent protection against blows, as did the sugarloaf helmet. Due to narrow viewing corridors and high temperatures experienced in the Holy Land, many opted for more lightweight alternatives with open faces.

Jerkin

A guaranteed chafe-free experience

Unseen, however often critical in keeping a Knight Templar breathing, was the haubergeon, a padded jerkin that sat against his skin. The jerkin extended over much of the upper body and was the last line of defence from enemy blows. In colder climates, it also helped keep the warrior warm – not an issue in the Holy Land.

Broadsword

Designed to hack and slash

As standard for western knights, the typical Knight Templar was armed with a broadsword, however when fighting on horseback spears were also used. Sometimes, two-handed broadswords were opted for while fighting on foot, but while they granted extra reach and cleaving power, they left the knight shieldless.

Surcoat

It ain't half hot in the Holy Land

Above the knight's chainmail sat the visible surcoat. This white garment not only kept the Sun off their metal armour, also displayed the symbols of the Order.

Chainmail

Thy enemy's blade shall not pass

The primary form of defence against enemy strikes, the hauberk, a long-sleeved shirt of chainmail fitted with chain covers for the hands and a chain coif hood for the head, was a knight's armour. The chainmail would be partnered with iron chausses to protect their legs.

Shield

The first and best line of defence

Adorned with the Christian cross of their order, the Templar shield was large and long, with a teardrop design protecting their entire torso and upper legs. It was constructed from wood and had a metal rim, the latter helping to protect against it splitting under the weight of sword blows. It had a leather handgrip at the rear.

right in the eyes of god, managed to persuade him to leave behind 10,000 French crusaders along with the necessary funds to pay for their upkeep. The Lionheart was now the central remaining commander of over 20,000 crusaders, knights and soldiers alike and, burning with glorious purpose, ordered the continuation of the crusade, with the bulk of the crusading army marching out of Acre in August's final days. This was no doubt who was now leading this holy crusade.

The next city on the crusaders' relentless march to Jerusalem was Jaffa, an important port that provided passage into the southern Mediterranean Sea. As long as Jaffa remained untaken Saladin had a natural avenue to pour more of his troops into the region from his impregnable stronghold of Egypt, but if it fell to the crusaders Saladin would be forced to move men over land, a far less effective and more time-consuming proposition. The city also lay a mere 65 kilometres (40 miles) from Jerusalem, making it the ideal coastal base for crusaders. Before it could be taken, though, the crusaders needed to get there in one piece. Richard knew Saladin was somewhere in the nearby area and, aware of his enemy's skill in arranging ambushes, ordered his troops to march down the Mediterranean coastline, with the baggage train protected by being nearest to the coast. This tactic prevented Saladin from attacking on one flank, as Richard also got his fleet to sail down the coast in parallel with them, shutting off the sea as an avenue of possible attack.

8,000

English knights and soldiers who journeyed to the Holy Land

However, to the north of Jaffa lay the Wood of Arsuf, one of the only forested areas in all of the Levant. The woods ran parallel to the coastline for over 20 kilometres (12 miles) and had to be traversed by Richard's army if they were to reach Jaffa. After harassing Richard's troops with small hit-and-run attacks within the woods, Saladin sanctioned a full-scale assault on the crusaders, which led to the largest pitched battle of the entire Third Crusade. Saladin knew the battle would be decisive, but couldn't possibly have foreseen how disastrous for him it would be. As the Sun went down on 7 September 1191 the Saracen army had

> "Saladin could only watch as man after man was publicly executed, their heads lopped from their shoulders atop the city walls"

been routed in a decisive counterattack led by Richard's Knights Hospitaller. Saladin retreated from Arsuf to regroup what was left of his battered army and lick his wounds.

The crusaders made a beeline for Jaffa, swiftly besieging and taking it. Despite some disagreement with the other crusader leaders, Richard - with Jerusalem almost in sight - decided to open negotiations with his enemy. Saladin, who was being questioned by some of his subjects following the defeat at Arsuf, agreed to the negotiations and sent his brother, Al-Adil to Jaffa to lead the talks. Despite headway being made - at one time Richard's sister Joan was being talked about as a potential bride for Al-Adil with Jerusalem as a wedding gift - the talks ultimately broke down.

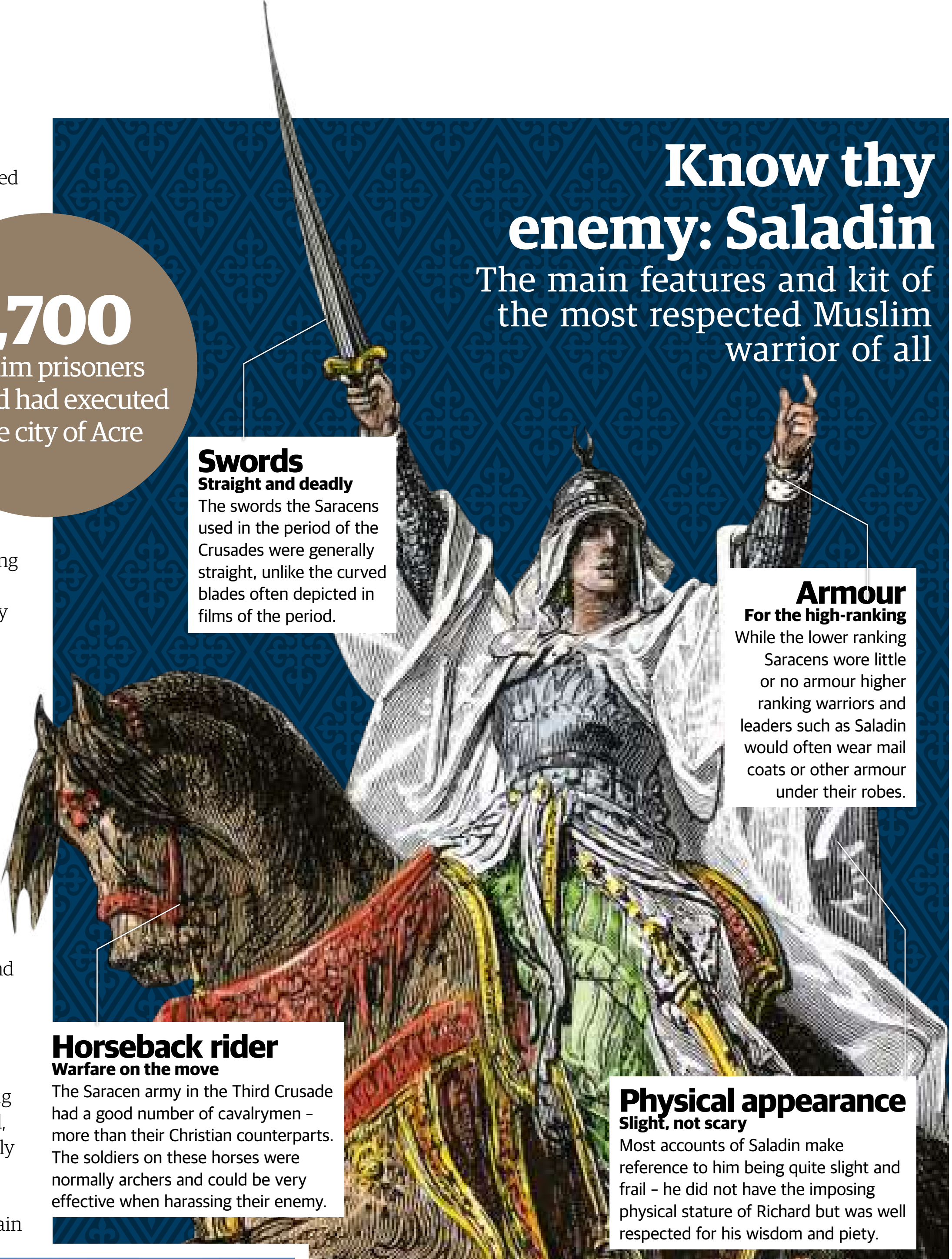
The breakdown of the talks caused unrest in the crusader ranks, with arguments arising about the best way to proceed toward their goal. Richard, growing tired of the constant in-fighting, acted decisively and ordered the army to move on Jerusalem in November, first moving through Ascalon and then Latrun. The Christian army was soon at Beit Nuba, a mere 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Jerusalem. The news quickly spread of the crusaders' progress and the morale in the Muslim garrisons within the city crumbled. Saladin's forces had been crushed, Acre, Arsuf and Jaffa taken and Jerusalem looked set to be next. Victory for the Third Crusade seemed inevitable.

At this vital point hesitation crept into the crusader ranks, though. Saladin had proven himself a worthy and tricky foe and, not knowing the extent to which his forces had been depleted, Richard feared that a retaliation attack, most likely another large-scale ambush, was very near. In addition, the weather in the winter months had taken a marked turn for the worse, with heavy rain

2,700
Muslim prisoners Richard had executed in the city of Acre

Know thy enemy: Saladin

The main features and kit of the most respected Muslim warrior of all



Swords
Straight and deadly
The swords the Saracens used in the period of the Crusades were generally straight, unlike the curved blades often depicted in films of the period.

Armour
For the high-ranking
While the lower ranking Saracens wore little or no armour higher ranking warriors and leaders such as Saladin would often wear mail coats or other armour under their robes.

Horseback rider
Warfare on the move
The Saracen army in the Third Crusade had a good number of cavalrymen - more than their Christian counterparts. The soldiers on these horses were normally archers and could be very effective when harassing their enemy.

Physical appearance
Slight, not scary
Most accounts of Saladin make reference to him being quite slight and frail - he did not have the imposing physical stature of Richard but was well respected for his wisdom and piety.

Salāh ad-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb (Saladin) was the first sultan of Egypt and Syria and the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty. He was elevated to this lofty position through a series of military victories, first under the Fatimid government and then his own leadership, with him overseeing the decisive Battle of Hattin in 1187. It was due to Saladin himself that the Third Crusade was instigated, with the fallout from the Battle of Hattin and the fall of Jerusalem leading to the famous 'Saladin tithe', a tax levied in England and some parts of France to finance an army that was capable of reclaiming the holy territory.

Despite Saladin and Richard's armies clashing multiple times during the Third Crusade, the two men famously shared a more complicated relationship than would have been expected, with great respect reported on both sides. After the Battle of Arsuf - a battle in which Saladin's army was soundly beaten - Saladin sent Richard two excellent horses as Richard had lost his own in the battle. The two men never met in person, though, and Saladin died a year after the Third Crusade, struck down by a fever while staying in Damascus.

The modern day city of Jerusalem

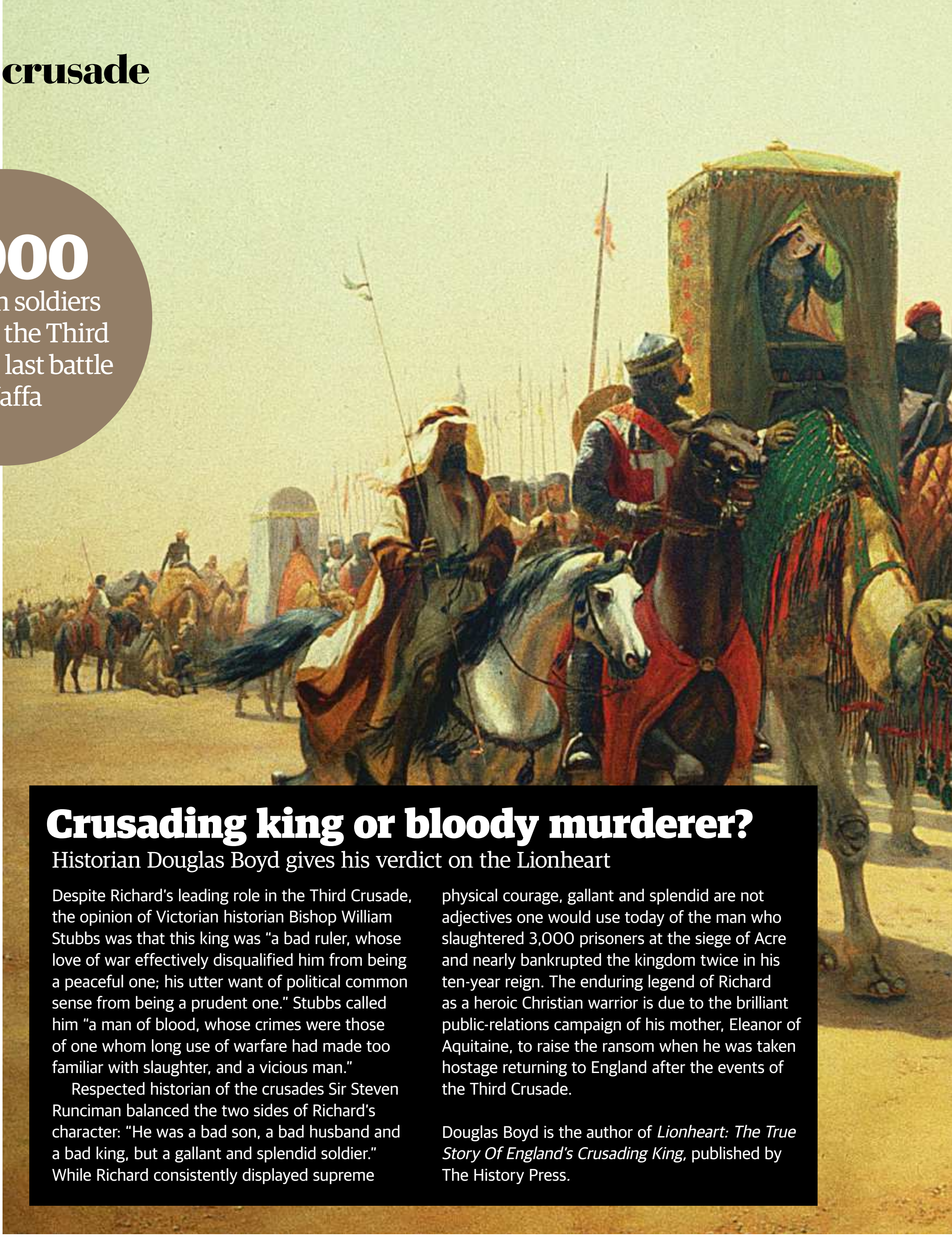
and hail leading to poor conditions under foot. These factors caused Richard to pause for thought rather than make straight for the holy city and he consulted his fellow crusaders. It was agreed that if they started besieging Jerusalem and were hit with a relieving force from Saladin, the general poor conditions would lead to a massacre. As such, Richard ordered a retreat back to the coast. The attack would have to wait.

2,000
Christian soldiers fought in the Third Crusade's last battle at Jaffa

The invading army spent the rest of the winter months in Ascalon before continuing hostilities in the spring of 1192. Saladin, who had been forced by his emirs (commanders) to disband much of what was left of his army – the emirs favouring consolidation rather than open hostilities – launched no major attack. However, bands of Saracen troops constantly plagued the crusaders, with a series of small fights and skirmishes slowly eroding the crusader army's numbers and morale. This came to a head on 22 May when the fortified town of Darum fell to the crusader forces after five days of bloody fighting. The crusaders had won great battles in the Holy Land but no more armies were journeying across the Mediterranean to bolster their forces; those men who fell in battle weren't going to be replaced. Richard's crusade was faltering, its primary purpose slipping away like sand in an hourglass.

The crusading king of England managed to marshal his remaining forces together for one last advance on Jerusalem, marching inland in June of that year. This time, far from being checked at Beit Nuba, the crusaders actually came within sight of the hallowed city. The time, it appeared, had finally come. Richard was to return Jesus's city to its rightful owners and reinstate Christianity as the dominant religious and military power in the Holy Land. However, as the tired, dusty and bronzed warriors stood there watching the distant city from afar, once more the poison of dissent started to seep among its leaders.

Despite standing before the city, months of resentment over the course the Crusade had taken boiled over among the military commanders, with debate over the best military course of action descending into personal attacks and squabbles. The majority of the leaders, including Richard himself, believed the best way to take Jerusalem was not besiege it but to attack Saladin directly in Egypt, thereby forcing him to relinquish it of his own free will as a bargaining chip to prevent his own fall. However, the leader of the surviving French crusaders, the Duke of Burgundy Hugh III, believed the only course of action was an immediate and direct assault on the city. News of the split in the leaders' plans filtered down to the crusaders themselves, with the knights and soldiers now breaking previous allegiances and siding with one side or the other, splitting the crusader army in two.



Crusading king or bloody murderer?

Historian Douglas Boyd gives his verdict on the Lionheart

Despite Richard's leading role in the Third Crusade, the opinion of Victorian historian Bishop William Stubbs was that this king was "a bad ruler, whose love of war effectively disqualified him from being a peaceful one; his utter want of political common sense from being a prudent one." Stubbs called him "a man of blood, whose crimes were those of one whom long use of warfare had made too familiar with slaughter, and a vicious man."

Respected historian of the crusades Sir Steven Runciman balanced the two sides of Richard's character: "He was a bad son, a bad husband and a bad king, but a gallant and splendid soldier." While Richard consistently displayed supreme physical courage, gallant and splendid are not adjectives one would use today of the man who slaughtered 3,000 prisoners at the siege of Acre and nearly bankrupted the kingdom twice in his ten-year reign. The enduring legend of Richard as a heroic Christian warrior is due to the brilliant public-relations campaign of his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, to raise the ransom when he was taken hostage returning to England after the events of the Third Crusade.

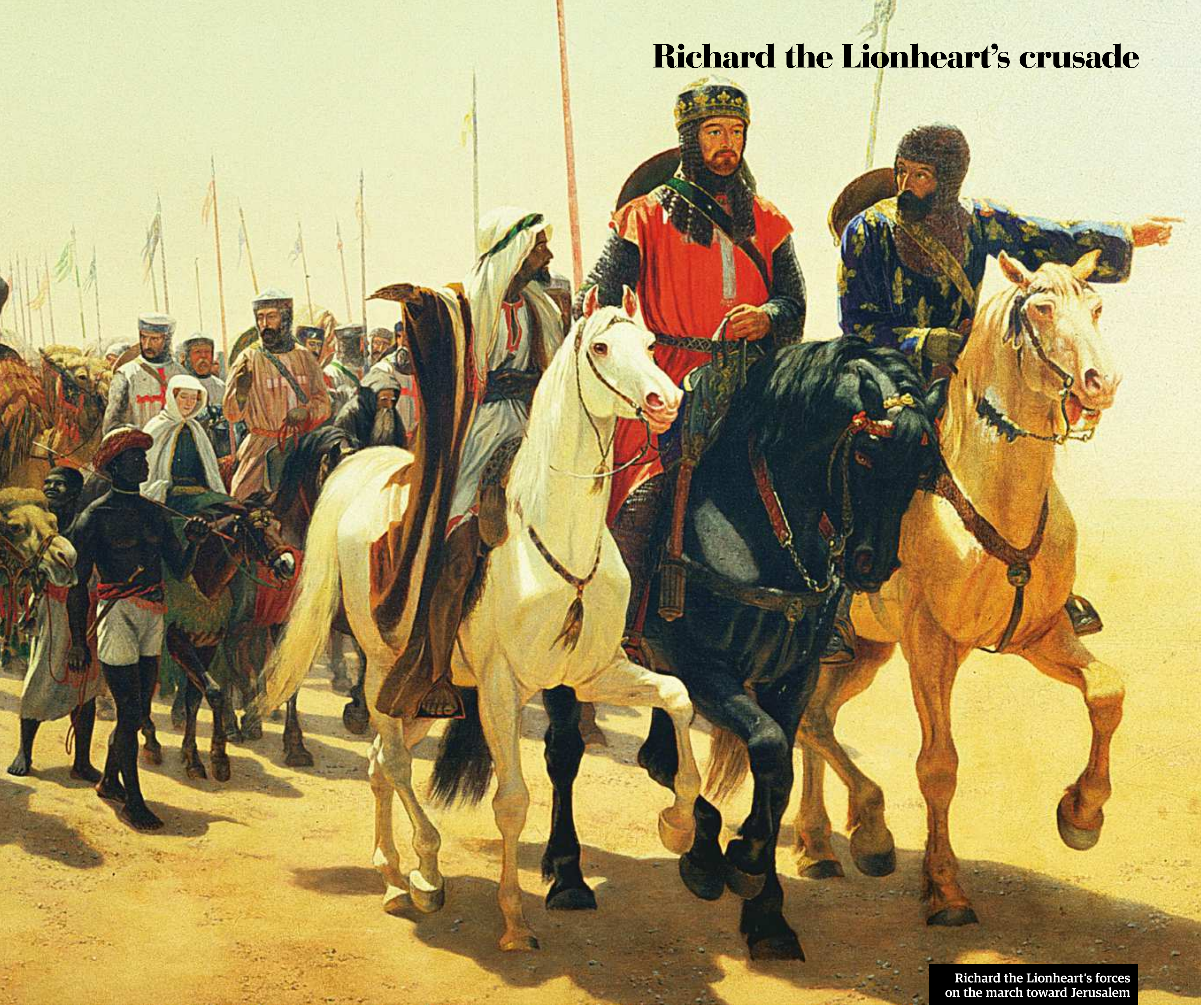
Douglas Boyd is the author of *Lionheart: The True Story Of England's Crusading King*, published by The History Press.

> "Richard believed the best way to take Jerusalem was not besiege it but to attack Saladin directly in Egypt"

Neither of the two forces were now powerful enough to assault a city, let alone Jerusalem, and as such Richard was forced to order a retreat. While progressing back toward the coast, angry with the French, Richard decided to return to England. However, just as he was approaching Jaffa, news arrived via a scout that the city had fallen to Saladin, who had personally overseen the assault. Furthermore, the scout reported that the lives of all the people there were under a very real threat as the Muslim ruler had lost control of his army, the thousands of Muslim soldiers driven berserk due to the massacre at Acre.

With the lives of the surviving crusaders very firmly in his hands – after all, it had been Richard who ordered the Acre executions – a return to England would have to wait. With a band of 2,000 surviving knights and soldiers, Richard launched one final assault on Saladin, approaching Jaffa by sea in a surprise attack. The Ayyubid soldiers who had only just taken the city were completely unprepared for the attack and were soon overrun, with a combination of knights and crusader crossbowmen decisively breaking their resistance. The attack was so brutally effective that Saladin was forced to flee from Jaffa to the south.

This would be the final battle of the Crusade for Saladin and Richard. Following Jaffa's second fall, the region entered a limbo-like stasis, with the Christian crusaders and Muslim Ayyubids



Richard the Lionheart's forces on the march toward Jerusalem

sapped of any further willpower for bloodshed. The fighting had gone on for three years and large parts of the historic area lay in ruins. Tens of thousands of men, women and children had lost their lives and, despite some areas of the Levant changing hands, nothing had really changed. Jerusalem remained under Muslim control, Saladin was ruler of the Ayyubid Empire and Richard the Lionheart was still the fierce warrior king with a renowned reputation in Europe without a firm foothold in the Holy Land. What had changed, though, was Saladin and Richard's desire for more war and bloodshed, and so a treaty followed. Jerusalem would remain under Muslim control but from now on, Christian pilgrims and traders would be permitted to visit the city, with their rights protected by law.

For Richard, the treaty was to be his last act in the Holy Land and the final curtain for the Third Crusade, with the king setting out on his return to England immediately after. His return journey, though, would not be as straightforward as the one over, with a series of events leading to his own capture by Leopold V, Duke of Austria, temporary imprisonment and yet even more battles. However, the war he would go down in history for was his quest for the Holy Land – a journey full of bloodshed, plunder and religious fanaticism, but little territorial success. It ensured his legacy would forever be debated between those who see him as a crusading Christian king and others who view him as an amoral, cold-blooded killer, a debate that still rages on today.

17

Months Richard the Lionheart remained in the Holy Land

Why was Jerusalem so sought after?

The geographical region of Palestine, between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, was referred to as the Holy Land by Christians and Muslims alike. Both religions claimed ownership due to an association with their faith, with the city of Jerusalem held in particular esteem. Both Islam and Christianity were Abrahamic monotheistic religions and as such, both sides considered the other to be unbelievers in the one true god and considered their presence heretical.

By the Third Crusade, Jerusalem and large parts of Palestine and the Levant region had changed hands again and again, with conflicts destabilising the region. Richard, coming from the Christian West, therefore perceived the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin's forces in 1187 as a direct attack on his faith. From Saladin's point of view he was merely taking back the spiritual heartland of his own faith; one that had previously rested in the hands of infidels.

© Joe Cummings; Getty; Alamy; Thinkstock

Betrayal of the Knights Templar

In seven years the Order was hunted, dismantled and executed. Was this justice for their sacrilegious practices, or were they the victims of a twisted plot?

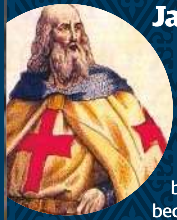
Jacques de Molay was calm. Through seven long years of accusations, trials, torture, denials and confessions, he had been anything but calm, but as the frail, bearded man was led out onto the Île aux Juifs on the Seine, he did not weep or tremble. A crowd had gathered to watch the old man die, and a pyre had been erected on the small island, ready to be lit and claim his soul. De Molay was stripped of the rags that were once clothes, down to his threadbare shirt, then the guards strapped his thin, pale body to the stake. Finally, the silent man spoke. He asked to be turned to face the cathedral of Notre Dame, and that his hands be freed so he could die in prayer. These requests were granted, and De Molay bowed his head in silent prayer as the pyre was lit. The flames grew fast, and as the tongues of fire lashed up around his body, he spoke once more, his voice rising above the crackle of the flames.

"God knows who is in the wrong and has sinned!" he proclaimed. "Misfortune will soon befall those who have wrongly condemned us; god will avenge our deaths. Make no mistake, all who are against us will suffer because of us!" The flames rose higher, but the pain did not tell on his face. "Pope Clement, King Philip - hear me now!" His voice roared. "Within a year you will answer for your crimes before the presence of god!" After these final words, De Molay fell silent, and the flames claimed his soul.

Before the year was over, Pope Clement and Philip IV were dead. Clement finally succumbed to a long illness on 20 April 1314, and the French king died after a hunting accident on 29 November 1314, aged just 46.

Key Figures

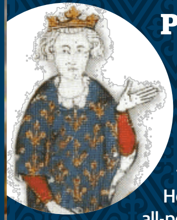
The men who destroyed the Order, and those who fought to defend it



Jacques de Molay

1243 – 18 MARCH 1314

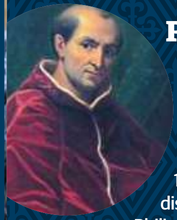
The 23rd and last grand master of the Knights Templar. Little is known of De Molay's early life, but he subsequently became the most well known Templar. He aimed to reform the Order, a goal he was never able to fulfil.



Philip IV of France

1268 – 29 NOVEMBER 1314

Also known as the Iron King, Philip led France from a feudal country to a centralised state. He had great belief in an all-powerful monarchy, and it was his ambition to fill thrones worldwide with his relatives. As well as destroying the Knights Templar, he also expelled Jews from France.



Pope Clement V

1264-1314

Born Raymond Bertrand de Got, Clement was made pope on 5 June 1305. There is some dispute over his loyalty to Philip IV, with some painting him as nothing but a tool for the French king, while others believing he showed surprising resistance. Either way, he is now remembered as the pope who suppressed the Knights Templar.

Guillaume de Nogaret

1260-1313

Keeper of the seal to Philip IV of France, Guillaume had previously played a role in the dispute between Philip and Pope Boniface; apparently persuading the king to kidnap the pope. He also had a central part in the fall of the Knights Templar, forcing members to give testimony against the Order.

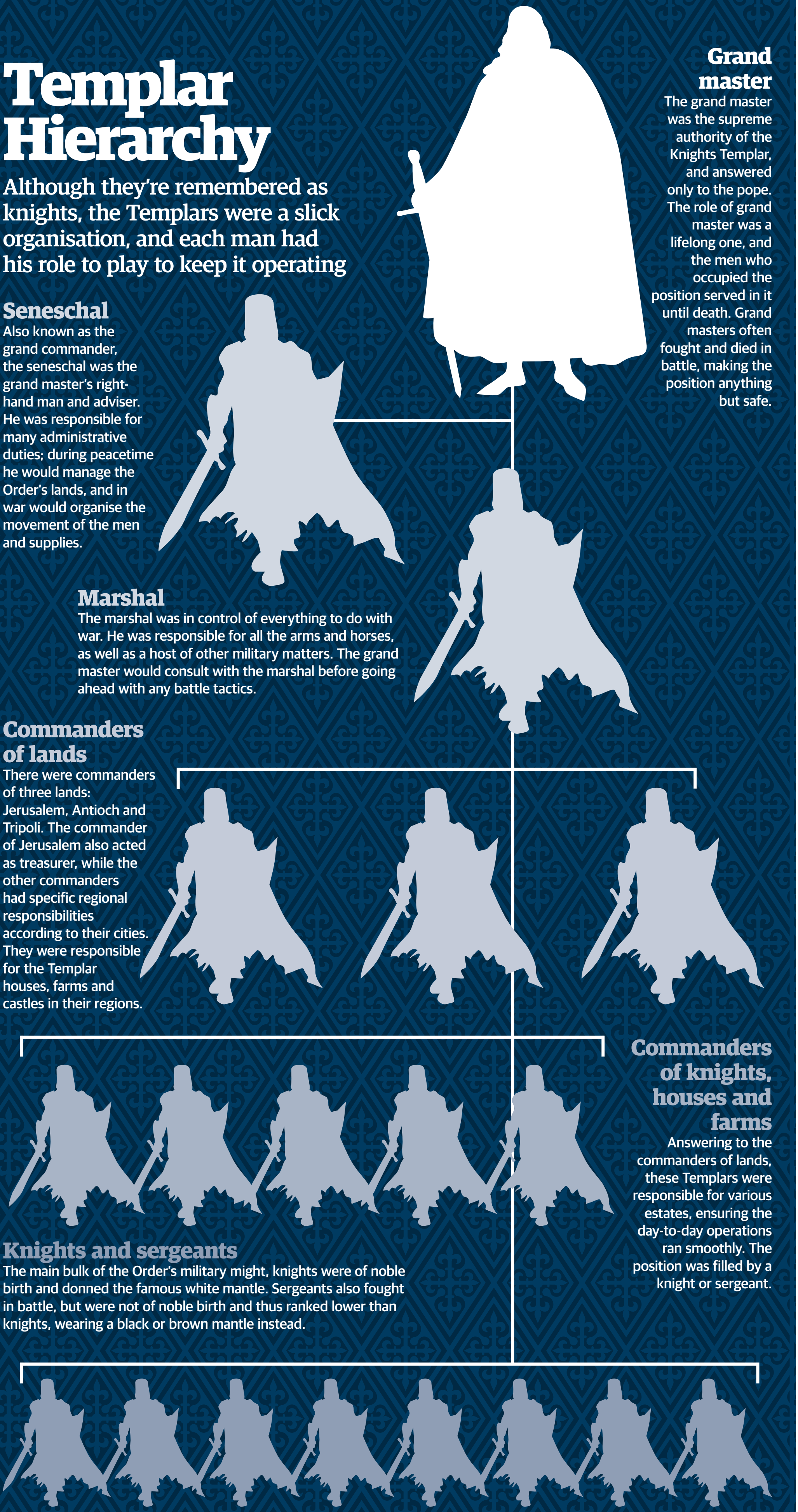
Geoffroi de Charney

UNKNOWN – 1314

Serving as preceptor of Normandy, Charney was a member of the Knights Templar from a young age and rose through the ranks. Like much of his order, he was arrested, tortured and confessed, then later retracted his statement. Charney was the only one of the three senior leaders arrested to rally by his master's side and deny the charges.

Templar Hierarchy

Although they're remembered as knights, the Templars were a slick organisation, and each man had his role to play to keep it operating



Grand master

The grand master was the supreme authority of the Knights Templar, and answered only to the pope. The role of grand master was a lifelong one, and the men who occupied the position served in it until death. Grand masters often fought and died in battle, making the position anything but safe.

Seneschal

Also known as the grand commander, the seneschal was the grand master's right-hand man and adviser. He was responsible for many administrative duties; during peacetime he would manage the Order's lands, and in war would organise the movement of the men and supplies.

Marshal

The marshal was in control of everything to do with war. He was responsible for all the arms and horses, as well as a host of other military matters. The grand master would consult with the marshal before going ahead with any battle tactics.

Commanders of lands

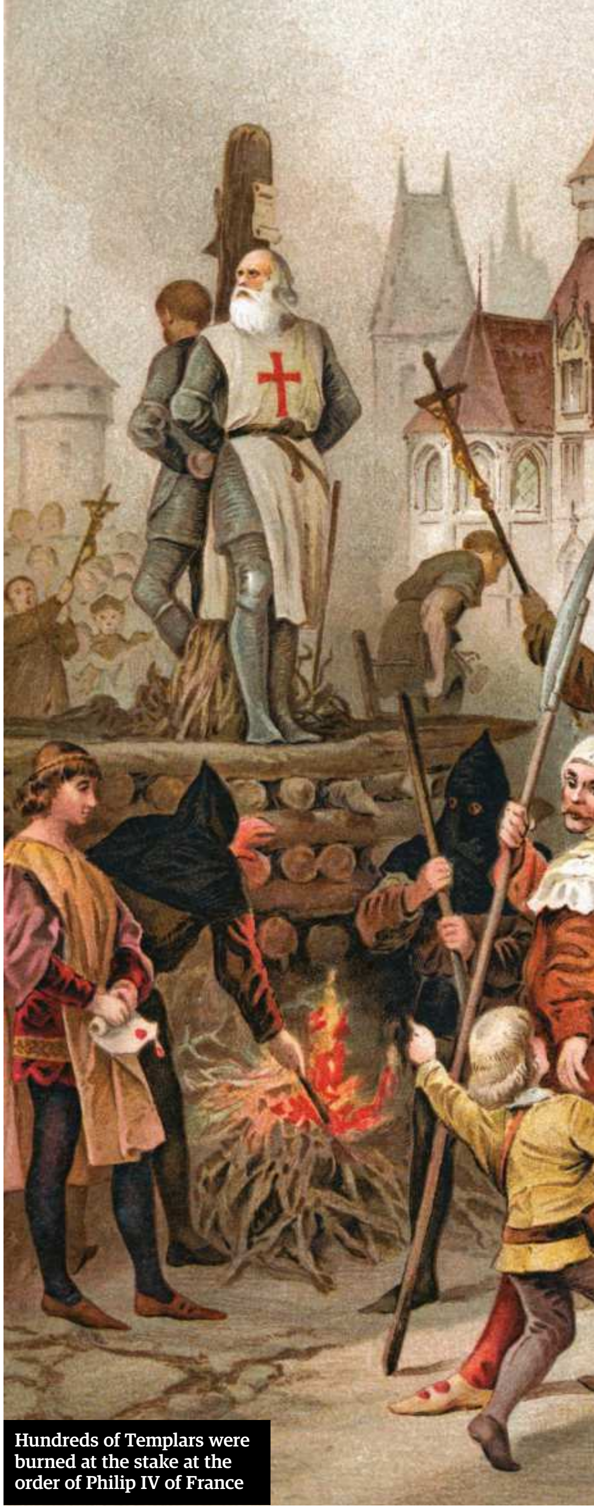
There were commanders of three lands: Jerusalem, Antioch and Tripoli. The commander of Jerusalem also acted as treasurer, while the other commanders had specific regional responsibilities according to their cities. They were responsible for the Templar houses, farms and castles in their regions.

Commanders of knights, houses and farms

Answering to the commanders of lands, these Templars were responsible for various estates, ensuring the day-to-day operations ran smoothly. The position was filled by a knight or sergeant.

Knights and sergeants

The main bulk of the Order's military might, knights were of noble birth and donned the famous white mantle. Sergeants also fought in battle, but were not of noble birth and thus ranked lower than knights, wearing a black or brown mantle instead.



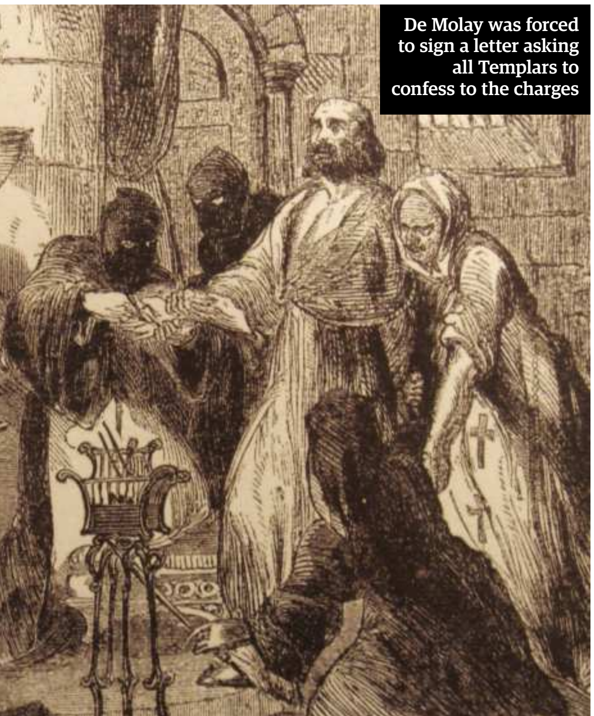
Hundreds of Templars were burned at the stake at the order of Philip IV of France

De Molay's order was all but extinct, but the curse of the last grand master of the Knights Templar would live on in infamy.

Jacques de Molay's famous last words may not have actually been spoken by the grand master himself. Like so many aspects of the Knights Templar, they have been distorted by myth and legend, and today we just don't know if he cursed his betrayers with his dying breath. Thanks to their sudden and dramatic fall, an array of rumours, myths and conspiracies have persisted about the mysterious order, obscuring their true humble beginnings and devastating end that rocked 14th-century Europe.

After the city of Jerusalem was captured by Christian forces in the First Crusade, many European pilgrims chose to make the journey to the Holy Land. However, this route was not safe for the Christians to travel along, so several knights charged themselves with protecting the roads from robbers and brigands. This guild of knights was founded on Christmas Day 1119 on the spot that marks the place where Jesus was crucified. As their headquarters were located on the Temple Mount, they became known as 'Knights of the Temple', or the Knights Templar.

Although the Order began in virtual poverty, relying on donations to survive, they quickly became one of the most powerful monastic orders in the Medieval world. With papal approval, money, land and eager young noblemen poured into the Templars' resources. Serving as the West's first uniformed standing army in their white tunics emblazoned with a fiery red cross, the Templars achieved legendary status in battle.



De Molay was forced to sign a letter asking all Templars to confess to the charges

This reputation as god's warriors was encouraged by their victory at the Battle of Montgisard, where 500 Templars helped an army numbering a few thousand defeat 26,000 of Saladin's soldiers. As well as being a mighty military force, they also controlled a vast financial network, which has been recognised as the world's first modern banking system. Many nobles who wished to join the crusades placed their wealth under the control of the Templars, who then issued them with letters of credit. This could be used at Templar houses around the world to 'withdraw' their funds. By the 13th century, the Templars were one of the most powerful and wealthy organisations in the world, entirely unaware that a dramatic and terrible fate awaited them. However, it would not be the Muslims in the East who would bring about their downfall, but their fellow Christians in the West.

After the fall of Acre in 1291, the West lost its last Christian possessions in the Holy Land. The Templars were cast out from their origins and stripped of their raison d'être. When Jacques de Molay ascended as grand master in 1293, he had one goal in mind – to reclaim what the Templars had lost. De Molay travelled across the West to rustle up support; he received it from Pope Boniface and Edward I of England. But the crusade was a disaster, and De Molay lost 120 knights trying to land in Syria. In 1306, the Templars supported a coup in Cyprus that forced Henry II to abdicate in favour of his brother.

These actions did not go by unnoticed. Many monarchs in countries with powerful Templar presences began to feel uneasy – with their power, what was to stop the Templars supporting baron uprisings in their own countries? The Templars had also been very vocal in their desire to form their own state, similar to Prussia's Teutonic Knights and the Knights Hospitaller, another Catholic military order, in Rhodes.

In 1305, De Molay received a letter from Pope Clement V, then based in France, concerning the possibility of merging the Templars with the Hospitaller. De Molay was ardently against the idea, but in 1306 Clement invited both grand masters to France to discuss the issue further, instructing them to "come hither without delay, with as much secrecy as possible." De Molay arrived in 1307, but Foulques de Villaret, the leader of the Hospitaller, was either delayed or sensed something was amiss, as he did not arrive, and while the pope and De Molay waited, an entirely different subject of discussion was raised.

Two years previously, an ousted Templar had accused the Order of many criminal charges, and although they were generally believed to be false, King Philip IV of France had recently brought them back into discussion. De Molay, tiring of the ludicrous accusations, asked Clement to look into the matter to rid him of the whole messy situation. On 24 August, Clement wrote to Philip, saying that he did not believe the accusations but would start an inquiry "not without great sorrow, anxiety and upset of heart," and advised Philip to take no further action. Philip did not listen. At dawn on Friday 13 October, the king's forces arrested every Templar they could find in France.

Philip IV's harsh actions were not unprecedented; he had a reputation as a rash and violent king. Philip had previously clashed with Pope Boniface VIII, and launched an anti-papal campaign against

Holy Grail

The Holy Grail is perhaps the item that the Templars are most closely associated with. From Wolfram von Eschenbach's Medieval romance *Parzival* to Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, throughout history the Templars have been linked to the mysterious relic. Often in fiction the Templars are portrayed as the guardian of the cup that Jesus used in the Last Supper, or even a deep and dramatic secret. Interestingly, the city in which the Templars were launched, Troyes, is also the place that the very first grail romance was written. Any actual link between the Templars and the grail likely emerged due to the fact that stories of the grail began to become popular in the 12th and 13th century, when the Templars were at the height of their power. Although they were part of society, the Templars were shrouded in secrecy even in their day, so it is no wonder such a mysterious vessel was linked to the Order.

In Numbers

20,000

members at their peak

54+

Templars burned to death in May 1310

15

witnesses gave evidence against the Order before 12 May 1310 – compared to 198 after

597

witnesses defended the Order before 12 May 1310 – compared to 14 after

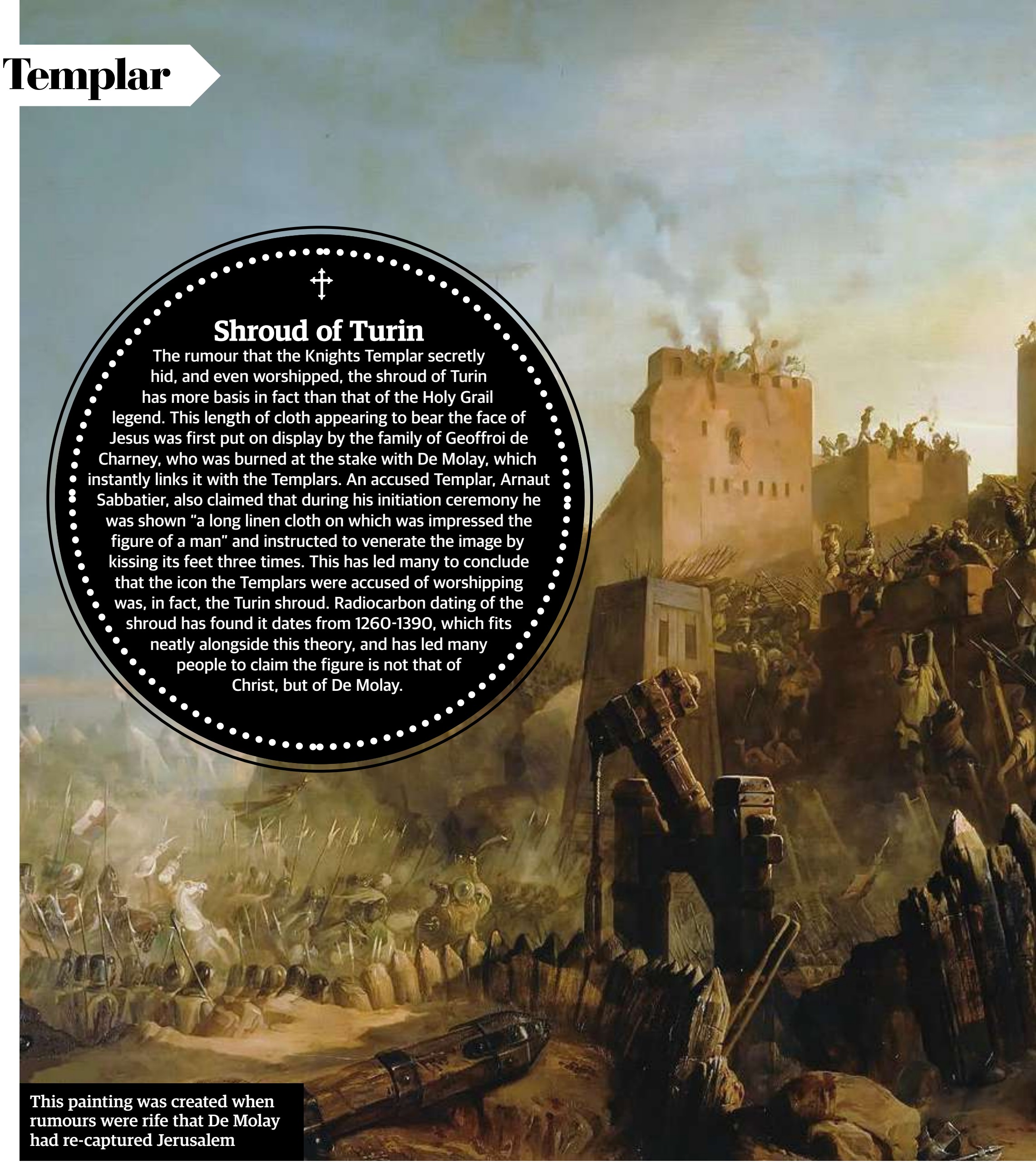
9 knights were originally gathered to protect pilgrims

200,000

livres paid by the Knights Hospitallers to the French king as 'compensation'

Shroud of Turin

The rumour that the Knights Templar secretly hid, and even worshipped, the shroud of Turin has more basis in fact than that of the Holy Grail legend. This length of cloth appearing to bear the face of Jesus was first put on display by the family of Geoffroi de Charney, who was burned at the stake with De Molay, which instantly links it with the Templars. An accused Templar, Arnaut Sabbatier, also claimed that during his initiation ceremony he was shown "a long linen cloth on which was impressed the figure of a man" and instructed to venerate the image by kissing its feet three times. This has led many to conclude that the icon the Templars were accused of worshipping was, in fact, the Turin shroud. Radiocarbon dating of the shroud has found it dates from 1260-1390, which fits neatly alongside this theory, and has led many people to claim the figure is not that of Christ, but of De Molay.



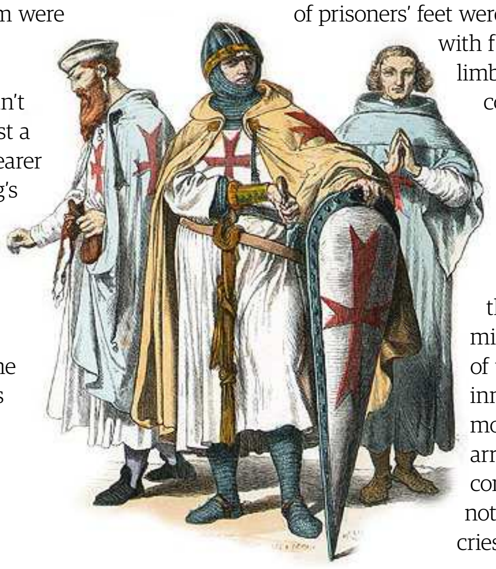
This painting was created when rumours were rife that De Molay had re-captured Jerusalem

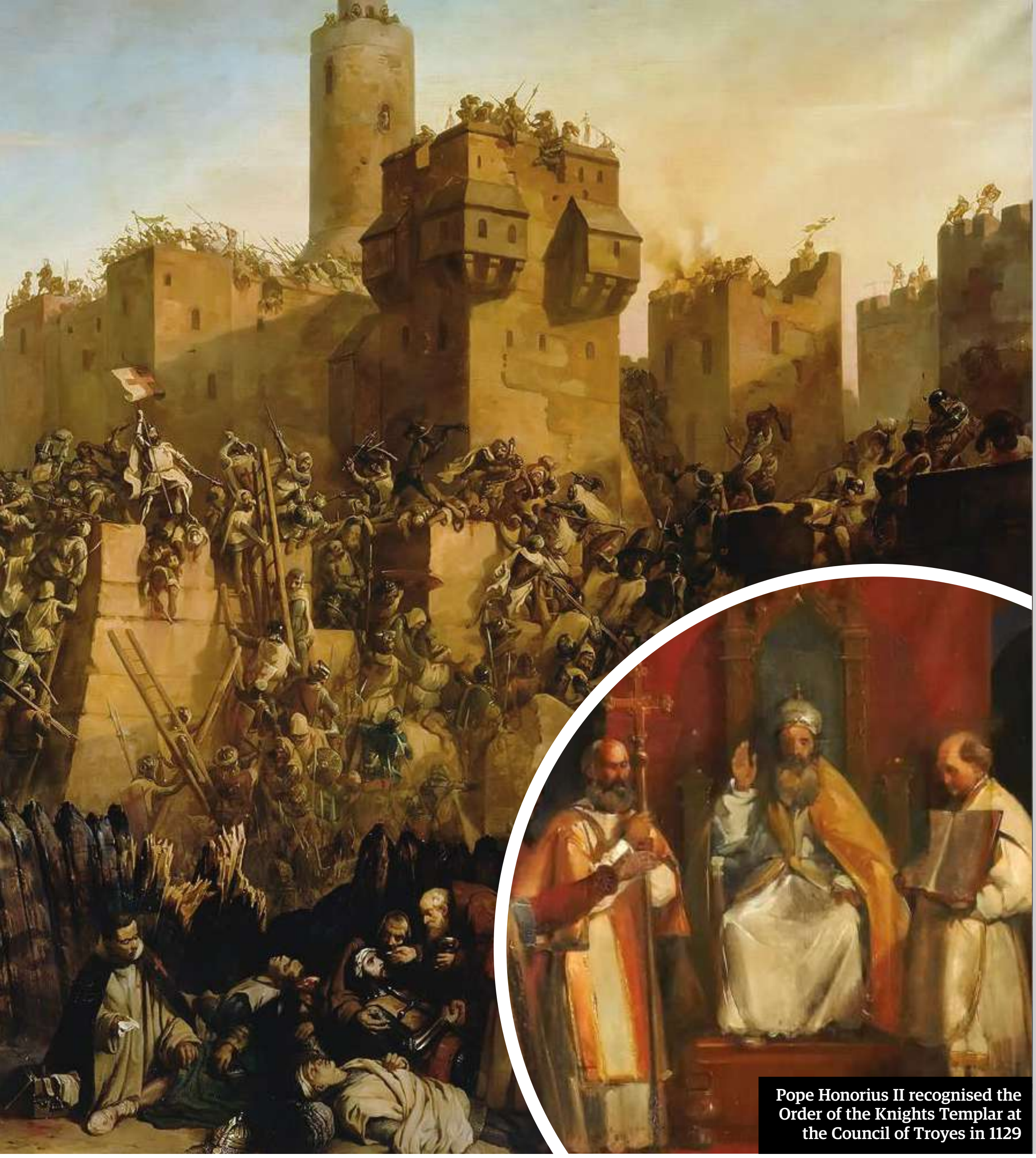
him. Believing France should have centralised royal power, the feud escalated and ended with Philip attempting to kidnap the pope in 1303 to bring him to France to face charges of heresy. The shock ultimately killed Boniface, whose successor, Benedict XI, was then only in the position for nine months before his own death. This allowed the king to appoint his selection, Clement, to the papacy. Philip had also previously arrested wealthy Italian bankers in the city, stripping them of their assets; then his target switched to the Jews, who were thrown out of the kingdom. These actions can be easily explained – Philip had inherited a kingdom on the brink of financial crisis, and he also believed that his authority was above that of the pope. Not only did he owe the Templars a great deal of money, but their link to the church made them the perfect choice for establishing the power of the monarchy. With their plans to form their own state, the Order had basically sealed their own fate. The Templars had to fall for Philip to rise.

When the Templars in France were arrested, the charges put against them were heresy, sodomy, blasphemy and denying Christ. By charging them with heresy, Philip could paint himself as a soldier of Christ, similar to that of his sainted grandfather Louis IX. But his actions were a violation of the church in Rome's orders, and Clement was furious. Philip had likely believed the pope to be a frail and infirm old man and certainly not a threat, but Clement wrote angrily to Philip, accusing him of violating every rule in this "act of contempt towards the Roman Church."

This did little to help the brothers of the temple. Some 15,000 Templars now resided in the prisons of France, many of whom were not nobles or knights, but mere farmers and shepherds. De Molay didn't escape capture either; just a day after acting as pallbearer at the funeral of the king's sister-in-law, the grand master was arrested along with the rest of his order. Philip seized their land and property and set about ensuring he obtained the confessions he needed to smash the Order to pieces.

There was one very simple way of acquiring confessions, and Philip employed it to great success: torture. Philip's inquisitors utilised a variety of horrific and demoralising methods to break the men's wills. The rack, which stretched a victim's body and dislocated his joints, was frequently used, as was strappado, which involved binding a victim's hands with rope that ran up a pulley, raising him in the air, then dropping him rapidly. The soles of prisoners' feet were greased then set alight with flame, teeth were pulled and limbs were flayed. The men were confined to cold, dark cells, and those who did not survive the torture were secretly buried. One anonymous writer in 1308 wrote of the conditions in the cells: "The human tongue cannot express the punishment, afflictions, miseries, taunts, and dire kinds of torture suffered by the said innocents in the space of three months, since the day of their arrest, since by day and night constant sobs and sighs have not ceased in their cells, nor have cries and gnashing of teeth ceased




Pope Honorius II recognised the Order of the Knights Templar at the Council of Troyes in 1129

in their tortures… Truth kills them, and lies liberate them from death."

It is of no surprise that when the Templars were brought to trial, many confessed to the various offences put against them. The Order was faced with five initial charges: the renouncement of and spitting on the cross during initiation; the kissing of the initiate on the navel, mouth and posteriors; the permitting of homosexual acts; that the cord they wore had been wrapped around an idol they worshipped; and that they did not consecrate the host during mass. Over the trials, the charges against the Templars grew and grew in number, ranging from burning infants to abusing virgins and even forcing young brethren to eat the ashes of the dead. Although these charges seem outrageous and somewhat farfetched today, Philip was operating at a time when paranoia and suspicion surrounding god and the devil was so rife that it could be reasonably believed that such devilish practices had infiltrated the church.

In hearings presided over by the inquisitors who had overseen the torture, 134 of 138 brothers confessed to one or more of the charges. De Molay himself signed a confession after undergoing the flaying of his limbs and testicles. This was quickly followed by matching confessions from all senior members of the Order. However, when Clement insisted the confessions be heard before a papal committee, De Molay and his men did an about turn. Safely away from Philip's control, De Molay retracted his confession, claiming he only gave it initially due to the torture he suffered. The other Templars followed suit and Philip's plans for a swift and brutal end to the Order vanished.

In an attempt to convince Clement, Philip visited him at Poitiers and sent 72 Templars to confess before him. He had his forces dispense pamphlets and give speeches concerning the depravity of the Templars. Philip warned that if the pope didn't act, he would have to be removed in order to defend Catholicism. Harangued, bullied and now under virtual house arrest, Clement gave in and ordered an investigation into the Templars. De Molay and the other senior members retracted their retractions and Philip's grand plans were in motion once again.

The Templars had nothing in the form of legal council; De Molay expressed desires to defend his order but was unable to as a "poor, unlettered knight." In 1310, two Templars with legal training made an impressive defence against the charges - insisting that the Templars were not only innocent but also at the sharp end of a cruel plot. The tide was beginning to turn in the Templars' favour, so

The Templars Across Europe

When the pope ordered Christian monarchs across Europe to arrest Templars, not all were willing

British Isles

Edward II was initially sceptical about the Templars' guilt and had no reasons to view them as a threat. He wrote to the pope in defence of the Order, but was eventually forced to arrest and try many Templars. Initially, torture was not allowed and all the Templars pleaded innocent, but when the pope's inquisitors took over, confessions came fast. However, they were spared burning and simply forced to repent publicly. Those who refused were incarcerated until death.

Italy

The situation in Italy varied. The Papal States unsurprisingly acted at once, but in Lombardy there was widespread support for the Order. For the number of Templars confessing to the accusations, there were just as many claiming that the others were lying. In Florence, despite using torture, only six of 13 Templars confessed.

Cyprus

King Amaury de Lusignan had earned his crown thanks to the Templars, so was understandably reluctant to arrest them. However, the leading Templars were eventually incarcerated after putting up a brave resistance. At trial, there were many witnesses who praised the Templars, but the king was brutally murdered during the trial and Henry II, enemy of the Templars, regained the throne. Torture began almost immediately, and many perished while protesting their innocence.

Portugal

The Templars in Portugal got off lightly compared to their counterparts elsewhere. King Denis I refused to persecute the Order, but could not overrule the papal bull to abolish the Templars. Instead, the Templars re-branded themselves as the 'Order of Christ' with the assured protection of Denis I, who also negotiated with Clement's successor for the Order to inherit the Templars' assets.

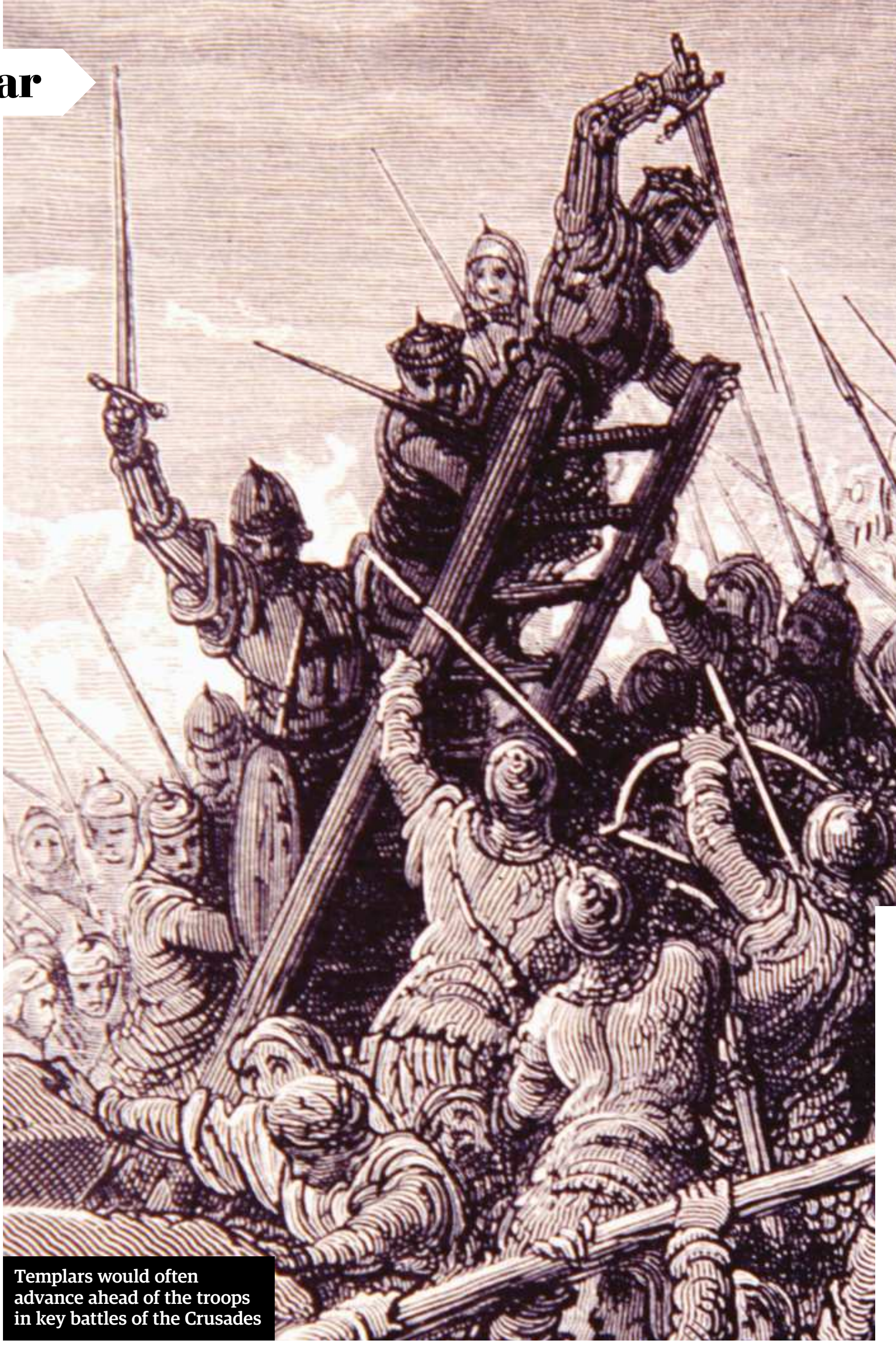
Iberian Peninsula

Despite initial doubts, James II of Aragon ordered the arrest of most of the Templars on 6 January 1308, before the pope ordered him to do so. However, many of the Templars set up defences in their castles and appealed for help, which unfortunately did not come. All of the Templars pleaded their innocence. With torture prohibited, no confessions were secured, and no Templar was condemned to death for heresy.

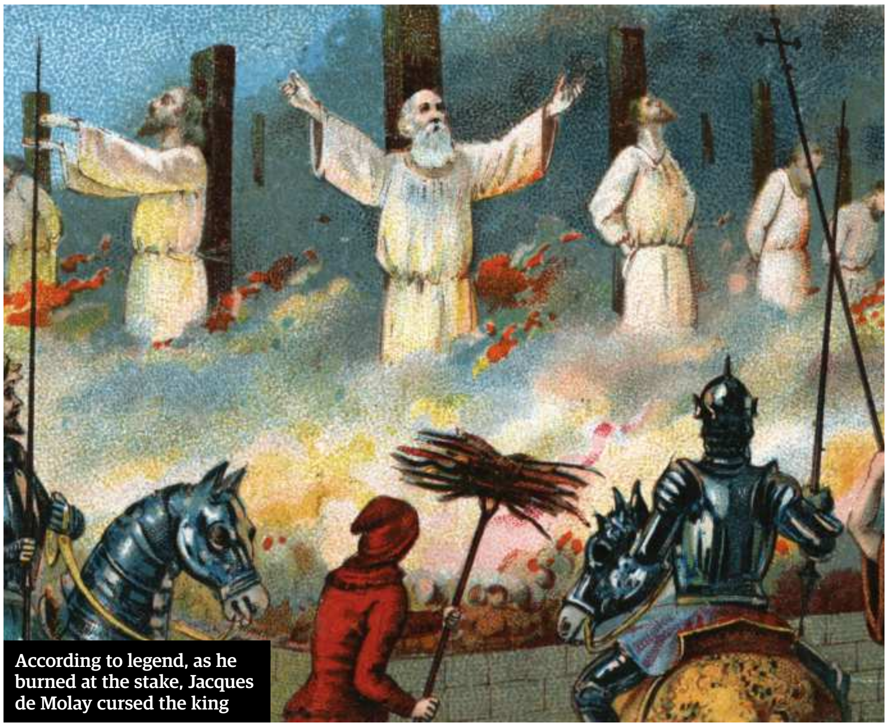
Guilty or innocent?

Was there any truth to the crimes the Templars burned for?

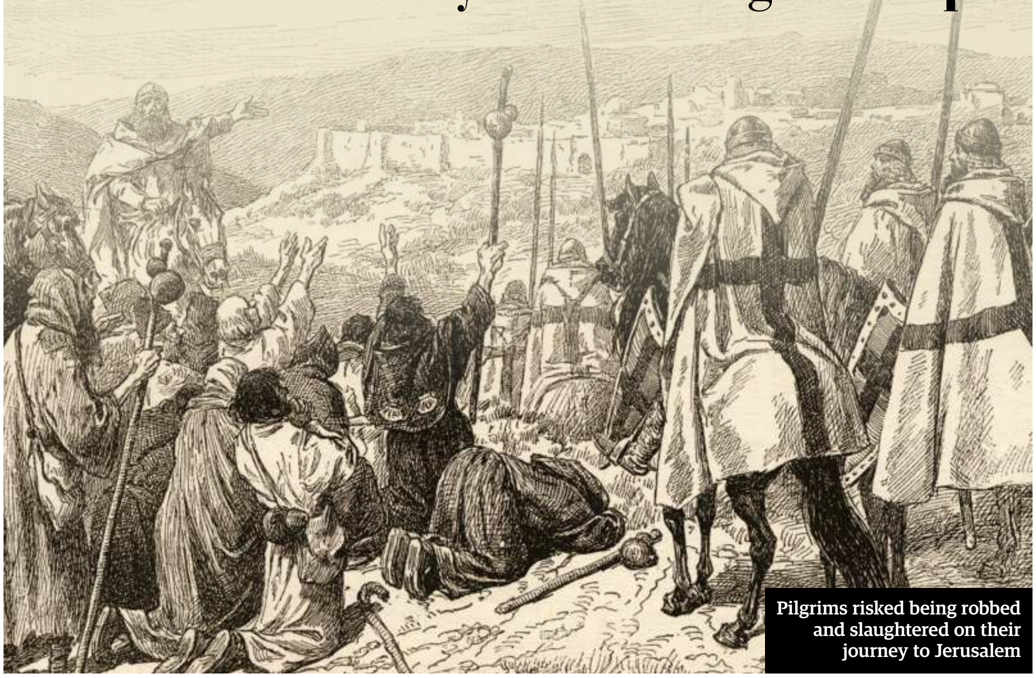
	FOR	AGAINST
SPITTING ON THE CROSS	Although often written as one of Philip's many trumped-up charges, there is evidence that this accusation had basis in fact. Not only did a number of Templars confess to it, but Philip's spies, who secretly joined the Order, confirmed it. A recent discovery of the 'Chinon Parchment' in the Vatican library further confirms the charges. Under questioning in 1308, Jacques de Molay admitted to such practices.	Although De Molay confirmed that spitting on the cross took place, chalking this up to heresy shows a lack of understanding. De Molay said these practices were designed to harden a Templar to the torture he would be subjected to by Saracens, training them to deny their faith "with the mind only and not with the heart." Philip's spies may very well have witnessed such acts, but they likely misunderstood their purpose.
WORSHIP OF AN IDOL CALLED BAPHOMET	The charge put against the Templars read "they surrounded or touched each head of the idols with small cords, which they wore around themselves next to the shirt or the flesh." Unlike Philip's other charges, this accusation was so specific to the Templars that it's difficult to believe he didn't have some inside information. Many knights did admit to worshipping this idol, which usually took the form of a life-sized head. We know for a fact that the Knights Templar possessed heads, such as the head of St Euphemia of Chalcedon. The fact that the Order kept these heads means that they certainly could have worshipped them in some way.	Only nine Templars in the Paris trials admitted to head worship, and descriptions of this 'idol' differed across Europe. In one version it was "covered in old skin, with two carbunkles for eyes," in another it was made of gold and silver; one had three or four legs, while in another account the head had horns. These conflicting accounts heavily indicate that these confessions were the result of torture. This idol was allegedly named 'Baphomet', but it may be the case that this was a mistranslation of 'Mahomet', ie Muhammad. Either way, if the Templars did indeed worship such an idol, it seems unusual that their temples were not filled with clear symbols of this figure.
HOMOSEXUALITY	The charges the Templars faced were that "they told the brothers whom they received they could have carnal relations together… that they ought to do and submit to this mutually." As the Templars took vows of celibacy and were not permitted to wed, it was believed that they engaged in homosexual activity to satisfy their desires. Although few confessed, many testified that sexual activity was not prohibited. The fact that so many denied it under torture is an indication of just how shamefully sodomy was viewed, giving the Templars all the more reason to hide the truth.	This was the most common accusation used during this era to discredit or ruin anyone. Philip had already charged Pope Boniface VIII with very similar accusations, and it seemed to be his favourite tool to use against his enemies as it was difficult to disprove. However, despite the torture, only three Templars confessed to sodomy in the Paris trials. Although De Molay was quick to confess to denying Christ, he vehemently opposed this accusation, stating that the Templar rules clearly prohibit any such behaviour with harsh punishment, such as expulsion from the Order.



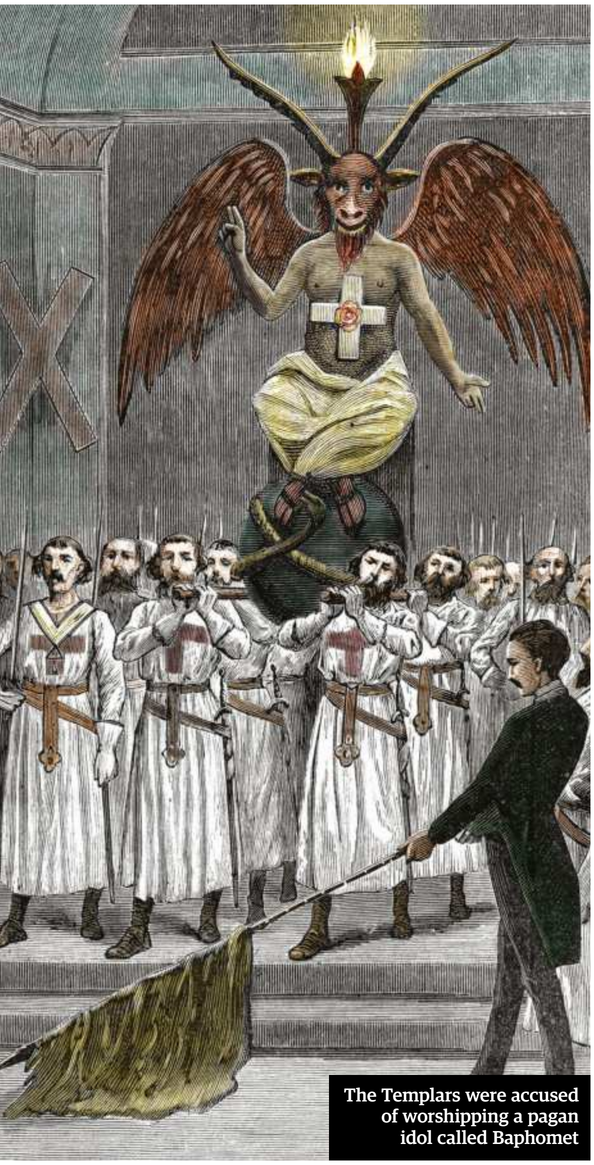
Templars would often advance ahead of the troops in key battles of the Crusades



According to legend, as he burned at the stake, Jacques de Molay cursed the king



Pilgrims risked being robbed and slaughtered on their journey to Jerusalem



The Templars were accused of worshipping a pagan idol called Baphomet

Philip made a swift and brutal decision. On 12 May 1310, 54 Templars who had previously withdrawn their confessions were burned at the stake as relapsed heretics and the two Templar defenders disappeared from prison.

With nobody to defend them, the Templar case crumbled. Under extreme pressure from Philip and likely wishing to rid himself of the whole matter once and for all, Clement issued an edict that officially dissolved the Order. This didn't mean the brothers were guilty, but it was the end of the Knights Templar for good. Much to Philip's annoyance, a second papal bull was issued that transferred the Templars' wealth to the Hospitaller. Finally, the bull 'Considerantes Dudum' allowed each province to deal with the Templars residing there as they saw fit. The fate of the leaders, however, was in the hands of the church.

De Molay and three of his senior members languished in prison, awaiting news of their fates. Finally, on 18 March 1314, the leaders were led out to a platform in front of Notre Dame to hear their sentences. All four were old men; De Molay was, by now, at least 70, while the others ranged from 50-60. Due to their earlier confessions, they were found guilty of heresy and condemned to life imprisonment. Two of the men silently accepted their fate, but faced with living out the rest of his life starving in a dank, dark cell as the last leader of a humiliated and disgraced order, De Molay finally found his voice. To the shock of the crowd, and the horror of the cardinals, the grand master and his loyal master of Normandy, Geoffroi de Charney, loudly protested their innocence. They denied their confessions, insisting their order was nothing but holy and pure. For seven years of imprisonment, De Molay had failed to defend his order, but now he was doing it – with his life.

This was completely unexpected, and left the cardinals confused about what to do. When the news reached Philip, he was furious. He ruled that as the Templars were now professing their innocence, they were guilty of being relapsed heretics, the punishment for which was death by fire. Before the end of the day, De Molay and De Charney were dead. Instead of living out his final days disgraced in a cell, De Molay's final moments of bravery led many to hail him as a martyr.

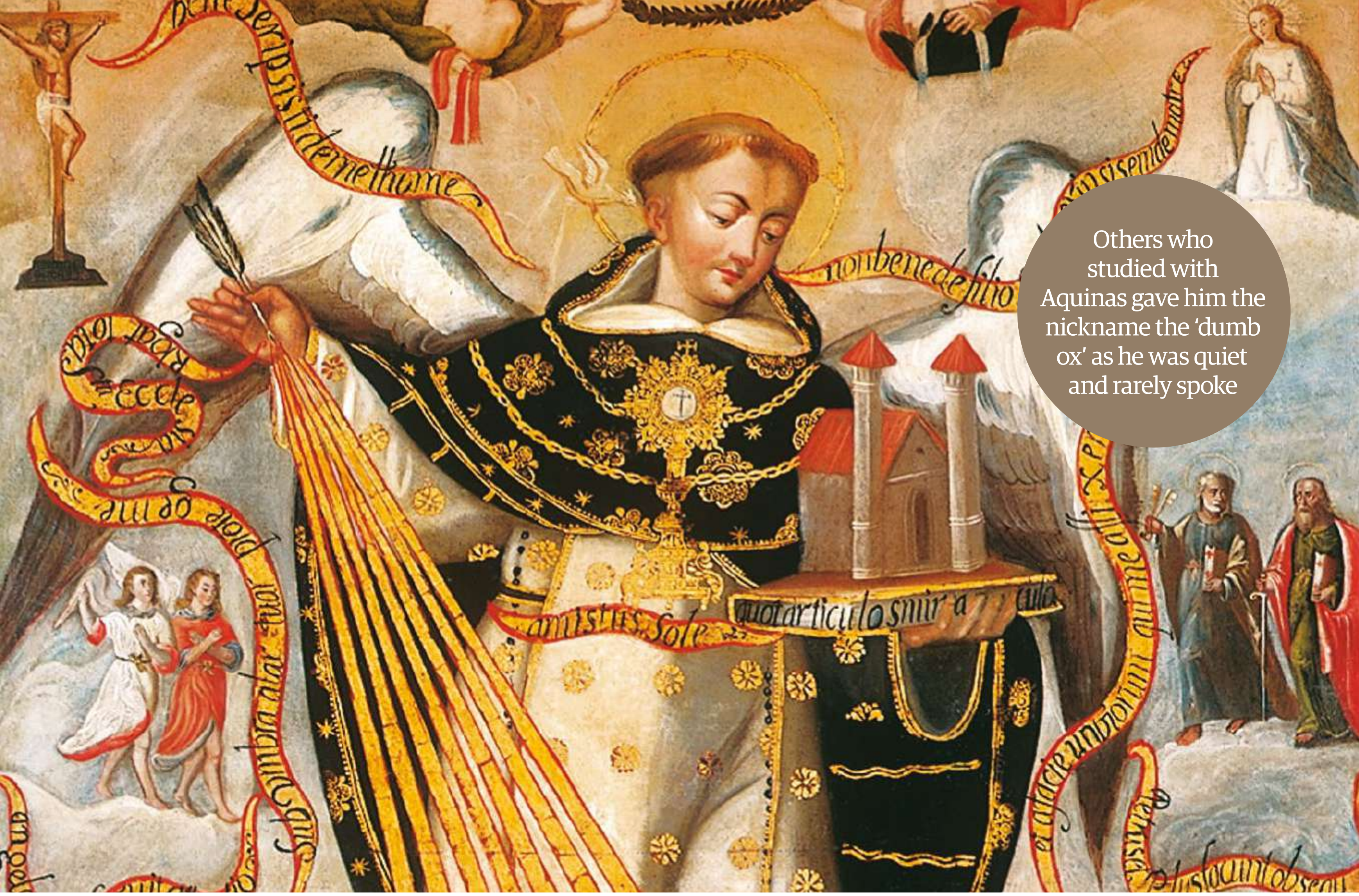
The remaining Templars were not released from their monastic vows and many were subjected to penances such as lengthy prison sentences. Others joined the Knights Hospitallers and some were sent to live out their remaining days in isolated monasteries.

Even with these numbers accounted for, there are still question marks over what happened to the tens of thousands of brothers across Europe. The Order's archive was never found along with the majority of their treasures, leading many to believe that the Templars received some sort of warning, allowing many to escape prior to the initial arrests. Various conspiracy theories regarding the fate of the remaining Templars have been concocted, from the proposition that they escaped on a fleet of ships to western Scotland to them becoming Swiss freedom fighters. Although we do know the sad tale that ended the Order, the mystery of what became of the remaining Templars is likely to stay unsolved.

French Revolution

When Louis XVI was executed by the guillotine at the height of the French Revolution, according to some sources a man jumped up onto the platform and dipped his fingers in the blood. He then cried out "Jacques de Molay, thus you are avenged!" Then the crowd cheered. The legend that the Templars would enact revenge upon the French monarchy who had damned them was a popular rumour at the time, so speculation that they played a key part in starting the French Revolution was rife. This legend works alongside the idea that the remaining Templars went underground to continue their work in secret, so relies on quite a leap of faith. But nevertheless, Jacques de Molay did indeed have his revenge.

© Alamy, Corbis, Getty Images, Joe Cummings



Others who studied with Aquinas gave him the nickname the 'dumb ox' as he was quiet and rarely spoke

Saint Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas believed religion and science could live in harmony, and left a legacy of reason within the Catholic faith

As Thomas Aquinas was abducted on his way to study in Paris, he might have wondered quite how, in his life devoted to the pursuit of God, he had found himself kidnapped by his own parents. Aquinas had been born into a Catholic family of comfortable feudal standing, in Aquino (modern day Lazio, Italy) and had been offered by his family to the abbey of Monte Cassino, near his home, as a prospective monk in 1230, while still very young. His parents may well have hoped that he would rise through the monastic ranks to become an abbot - but Thomas was set to achieve much greater things. He spent nine years at the abbey, enjoying the life of spiritual devotion and cultural enrichment. But the Holy Roman emperor of the time, Frederick II, had long been in conflict with the pope, and eventually expelled the monks of Monte Cassino, in fear of their obedience at the pope's commands.

Thomas was then sent to the emperor's recently founded university, the University of Naples, where he was to find the passion for science and philosophy that would define his life's work. Here, he discovered translations of works from Greek and Arabic on philosophy, which exposed him to ideas that he had not previously imagined. This new learning was a great motivator in his eventual decision to join the recently founded Dominican order, who held democracy and teaching above the manual labour and life of prayer favoured by the government-controlled monks. His parents, who had long hoped for his success in the traditional monastic life, were not pleased with this development, and were even less so when he was sent to Paris by the university, in a bid by his superiors in Naples to remove him from

Monte Cassino Abbey, where Aquinas spent his early years as a prospective monk

the clutches of his disapproving family, and to allow him to further his studies. But their plan was scuppered, and Aquinas' family had him seized and taken into captivity on his way to the French capital.

While many might bend to the will of their family after a dramatic abduction such as this, Thomas stubbornly held to his beliefs and refused to give up his plans. After a year of imprisonment at the hands of his own flesh and blood, during which time he taught his sisters and reportedly repelled the attempts by his brothers to hire a prostitute to seduce him into temptation. He was freed in 1245, and set off once again to pursue his religious calling.

> Aquinas was afraid of storms throughout his life, possibly as a result of his sister dying after being struck by lightning

Aquinas eventually arrived in Paris, and once there, he enrolled at the convent of Saint-Jacques, a great Dominican university, and began to study under Albertus Magnus, a renowned scholar of wide intellectual expertise. They would, together, study the translated works of Aristotle and consider the possibility of the integration of these ideas into the Catholic faith, as the opposing ideas expressed by reason and science were beginning to create fear within the church. Authorities within the church, and within other religions, even tried to suppress the naturalism and rationalism that were emerging as a result of the rediscovery of these ancient Aristotelian ideas. Thomas Aquinas studied the new works at length, and lectured and wrote on the ways in which both science and religion could exist together.

In 1259, Aquinas became theological adviser and lecturer to the papal Curia, which meant assisting in the governance of the Catholic Church. This led him to return to Italy, where he taught at a convent in Rome, and then to the papal Curia in Viterbo. In 1268, he was swiftly moved to Paris, to weigh in on a defining argument that was unfolding there.

The works of Aristotle that had been so central to Aquinas' understanding and work in the realms of religion and reason had also been discovered by the Parisian masters, along with the works of Averroës, an Arabic philosopher in Spain, who had interpreted the Ancient Greek philosopher's words. In them, he found two fundamental concepts of truth – one religious, and one rational, but both equally valid. The dualism of faith and reason was not accepted by the Muslim faith, who suppressed the work of Averroës, and the Catholic faith was not keen to adopt it either.

But Aquinas recognised this as a breakthrough. He discussed the two truths as 'natural law' – that is, the law of the world around us, visible to anybody, whether they have faith or not, and 'eternal law' – the law of God, only understood by those with faith and explaining a different plane of being to natural law.

He protested against the theologians who disagreed with him, but his theories were discredited along with those of Averroës in 1270. Aquinas had recognised the suppression of reasoned thought within the Muslim faith that had come from refusing to accept this duality, and had looked for a solution. But his theories created a division in the church that continues in some form to this day, between those who believe that reason is a force of confusion within the realms of faith.

Despite this, his extensive periods of teaching and publishing of seminal works, meant that Thomas Aquinas was canonised and made the patron saint of teachers. Those who follow his teachings today are called 'Thomists', and his legacy forms a vital part of the Dominican order to this day.

Did he levitate?

One of the best-known aspects of the story of Aquinas is that he was said, in moments of inspiration, deep prayer and excitement, to possess the ability to levitate. The claim is backed up by testimonies from monks who claim to have found him while he prayed, defying gravity and floating above the ground. Aquinas also claimed to have had visions of the Virgin Mary, who told him that he would not be a bishop – a welcome relief for Aquinas. The reports of these miracles helped make the case for him to be sainted.

Aquinas' handwriting was famously terrible, but he had many secretaries to whom he could dictate

The works of Thomas Aquinas

Summa Contra Gentiles

In this piece, Thomas Aquinas attempts to persuade non-believers of the reasonable nature of Christianity, and thus convert them. It is much simpler than his famous later work, *Summa Theologica*, and rather than rationalising the existence of God, instead attempts to convince the reader of the merits of religion.

Contra Errores Graecorum

The title of this work translates as 'Against the errors of the Greeks'. It was written in 1263 and the title was not given by Aquinas himself. It is not an attack on the Eastern Orthodox Church, but rather a defence against misunderstandings between them and the Catholic Church.

Summa Theologica

Here, Thomas Aquinas describes a key theory, the 'five ways' (quinque viae), aiming to prove the existence of God. They are: God is simple, without body or parts. God is perfect, lacking nothing. God is infinite, not limited by space or intellect. God is immutable. God is one, so the essence of God is its existence.

Commentaries On Aristotle

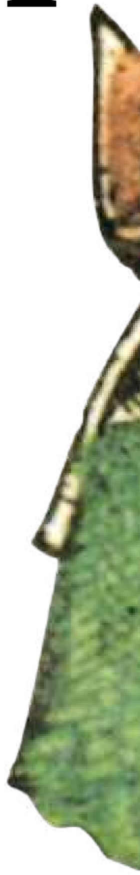
Not surprisingly, given his devotion to Aristotle's work, Aquinas wrote many works commenting on Aristotle's own writings. These included commentaries on: *Posterior Analytics*, *On Sense and What is Sensed*, *Memory and Recollection*, *Meteorology*, *On Interpretation*, *On Generation and Corruption*, and *On the Heavens and Earth*.

On Kingship To The King Of Cyprus

In this work, Thomas Aquinas considers questions of leadership, such as what the best form of government is, what separates a king from a tyrant, and is government a force for good or evil? The piece was dedicated to the king of Cyprus of the time, for his own study, not as a slight on his leadership.

Three popes and a Western Schism

During 40 years of contentious rivalry from 1378 to 1417, three popes claimed divine authority and the Catholic Church experienced in turmoil



For 68 years the seat of the Catholic Church was in Avignon, France. Elected in 1305, Pope Clement V, French by birth, refused to relocate to Rome. Four years later he established the papal enclave at Avignon. Six successors also reigned from the French town, and during the period the papacy came increasingly under the influence of the French crown. The Avignon papacy became known for corruption and favouritism toward French interests, which damaged papal relations with other regions in Western Christendom.

On 17 January 1377, Pope Gregory XI brought the papacy back to Rome, although six of his 22 cardinals remained in Avignon at the time of his death in March 1378. Gregory's death brought the people of Rome into the city's streets. Fearful that another French pope would be elected and the papacy would again withdraw to Avignon, angry crowds demanded the election of a Roman pope, or at least an Italian church leader.

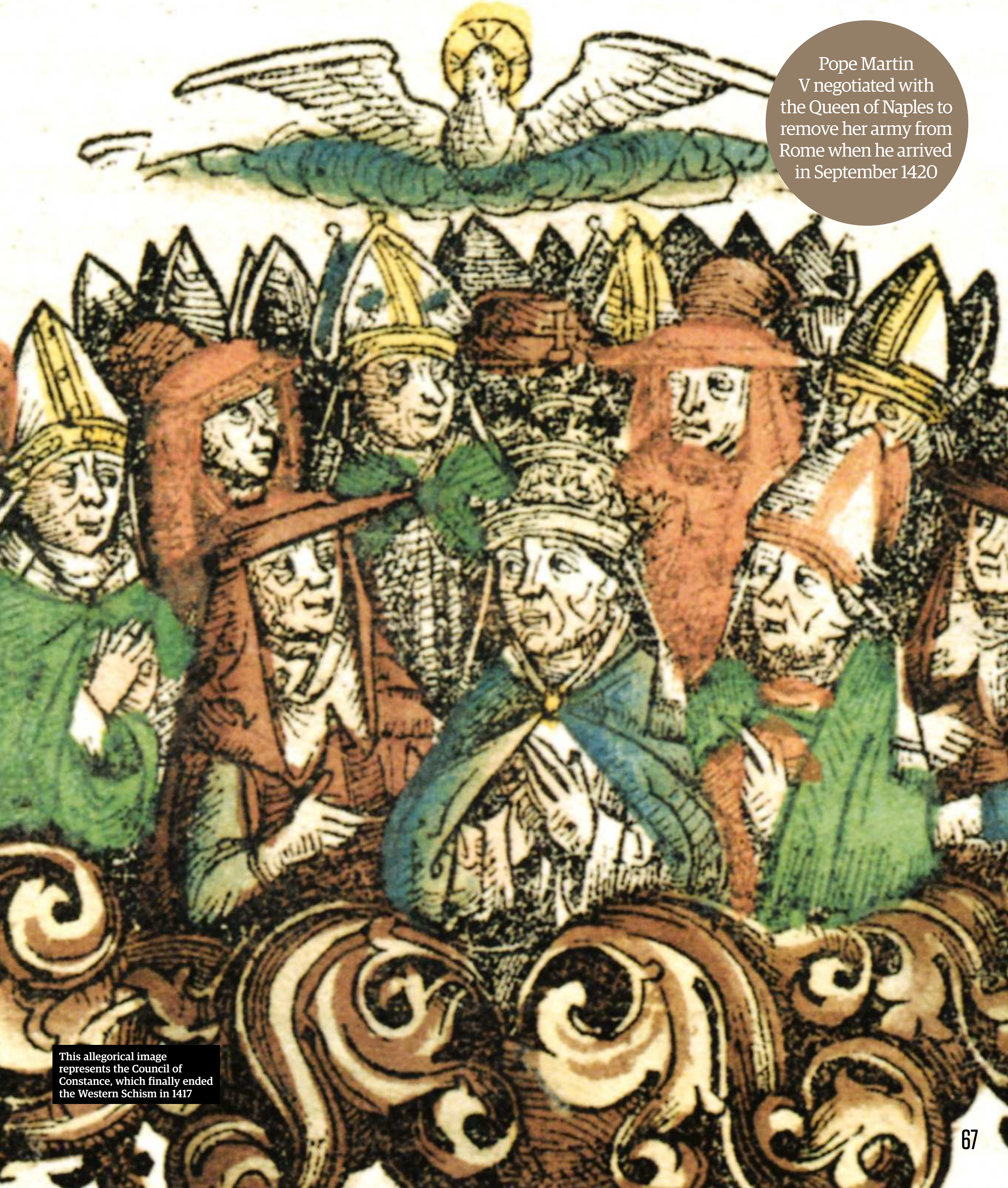
> Five days after requesting Pope Urban VI abdicate, French cardinals said he was removed from office as he was incompetent

In April 1378, the election of a new pope took place amid a wave of civic unrest. The 16 cardinals gathered in Rome elected Bartolomeo Prignano, the Archbishop of Bari, as the new pope. Unaware that an Italian had been chosen, an angry mob broke into the Vatican Palace and put the cardinals to flight. In the coming days, however, Pignano was proclaimed Pope Urban VI, and the people were mollified with his coronation at St Peter's Basilica on 18 April.

Soon, however, Urban VI began to deal harshly with his close associates. Some of the cardinals believed that the sudden possession of power had caused him to become mentally unstable. Urban VI railed at the cardinals and stated bluntly that he would not condone the continued practice of receiving gifts or payments, influence peddling that tainted the papal court. He further held them in contempt as lazy and corrupt. When Urban VI formally announced that the papacy would remain in Rome, King Charles V of France was greatly offended.

Although much of Urban's criticism of the cardinals may have been justified, a grain of truth remains in their assessment of the pope's conduct. The cardinals were concerned that their way of life was being altered, but they were also fearful that a mentally unstable pope could do irreparable harm to the prestige of the papacy and the wider church.

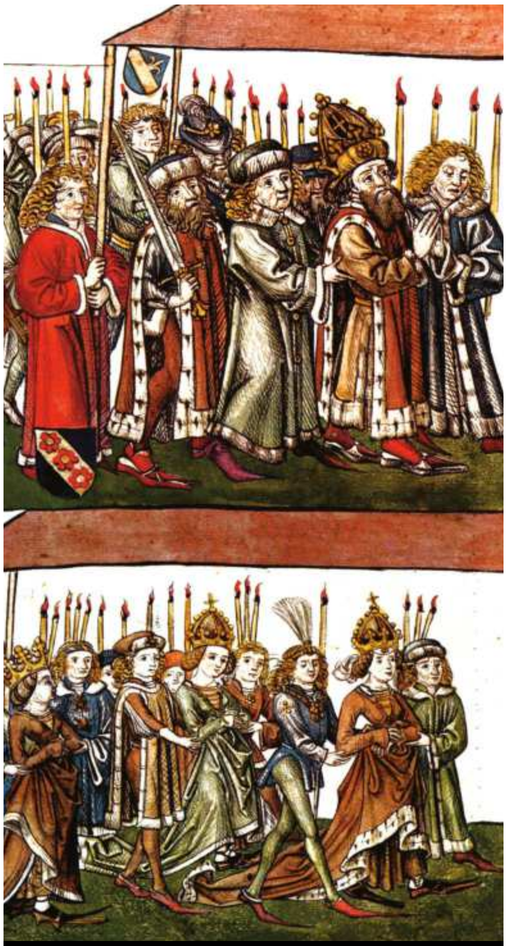
In August 1378, the French cardinals met in Anagni southeast of Rome and issued an invitation to Urban VI to join the assembly. The Pope sensed a trap, believing that he might be kidnapped or even murdered. He declined, and in his absence the cardinals issued a statement of grievances against him and invalidated his election. They cited the civil disturbance in Rome at the time of the election and asserted that their vote had occurred under duress. The French cardinals sent a letter to the Italian cardinals who were not present,



Pope Martin V negotiated with the Queen of Naples to remove her army from Rome when he arrived in September 1420

This allegorical image represents the Council of Constance, which finally ended the Western Schism in 1417

Three popes and a Western Schism



Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund and other dignitaries enter Constance for the decisive council that will end the Western Schism

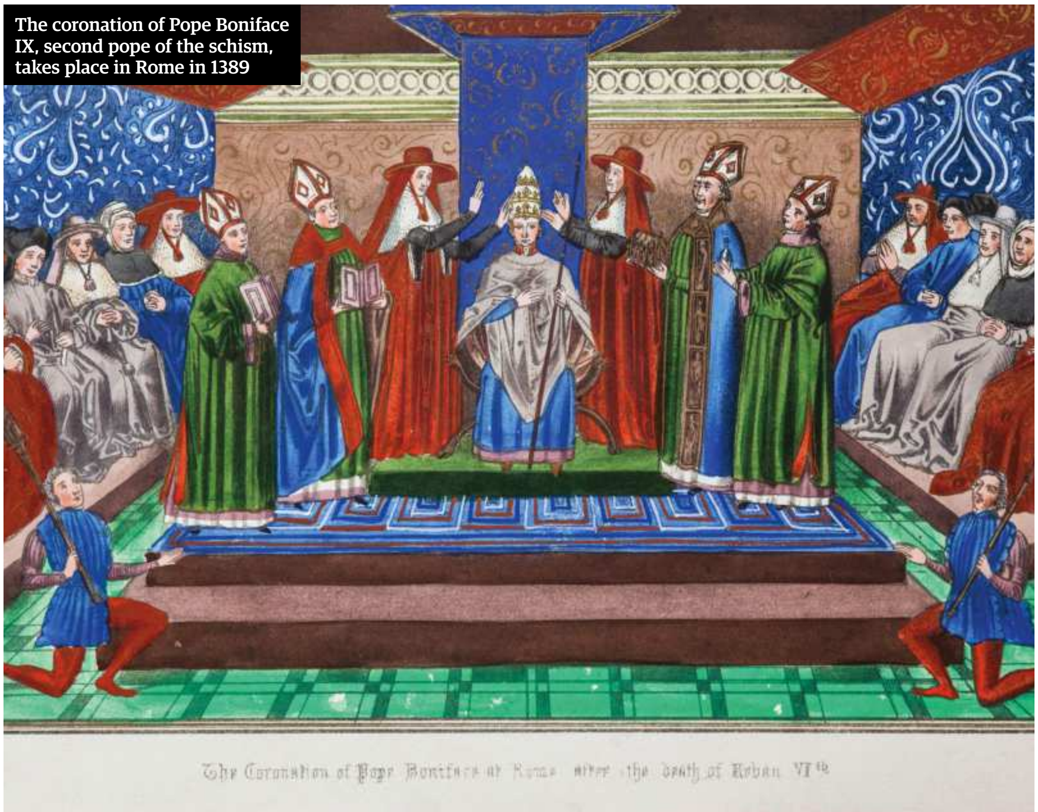
declaring the papacy vacated. On 2 September they proceeded to elect another cardinal, Robert of Geneva, as the new pope. Robert took the name Clement VII and moved to Avignon in 1379.

Urban VI could not be moved from Rome, and the two camps were at odds for the next 38 years. Each pope excommunicated the other. Some of Urban's supporters referred to Clement as the 'Antipope' or even the 'Antichrist'.

In the wake of the burgeoning schism, a wave of political uncertainty swept western Europe. As rulers were compelled to declare themselves for one pope or the other, their people generally fell into line. France, Aragon, Castile and León, Savoy, Naples, Burgundy, Cyprus, Scotland and Welshmen under Owain Glyndwr (in open rebellion against the English crown) supported Clement VII at Avignon. Pope Urban VI was upheld by the Holy Roman Empire, England, Portugal, Poland, Hungary, Sweden, the city-states of Northern Italy, Sweden, Norway and others.

The death of Urban VI in 1389 might have presented an opportunity to heal the schism. However, instead of attempting to reach some accommodation the Roman cardinals elected a successor, Cardinal Pietro Cybo Tomacelli, who took the name Boniface IX. When Clement VII died in September 1394, the French cardinals in Avignon elected Pedro Martínez de Luna y Pérez de Gotor, whom they crowned Benedict XIII.

The coronation of Pope Boniface IX, second pope of the schism, takes place in Rome in 1389



The Coronation of Pope Boniface at Rome after the death of Urban VI th

In 1404, Avignon rejected an offer from Rome to replace Pope Boniface IX if Pope Benedict XIII would abdicate

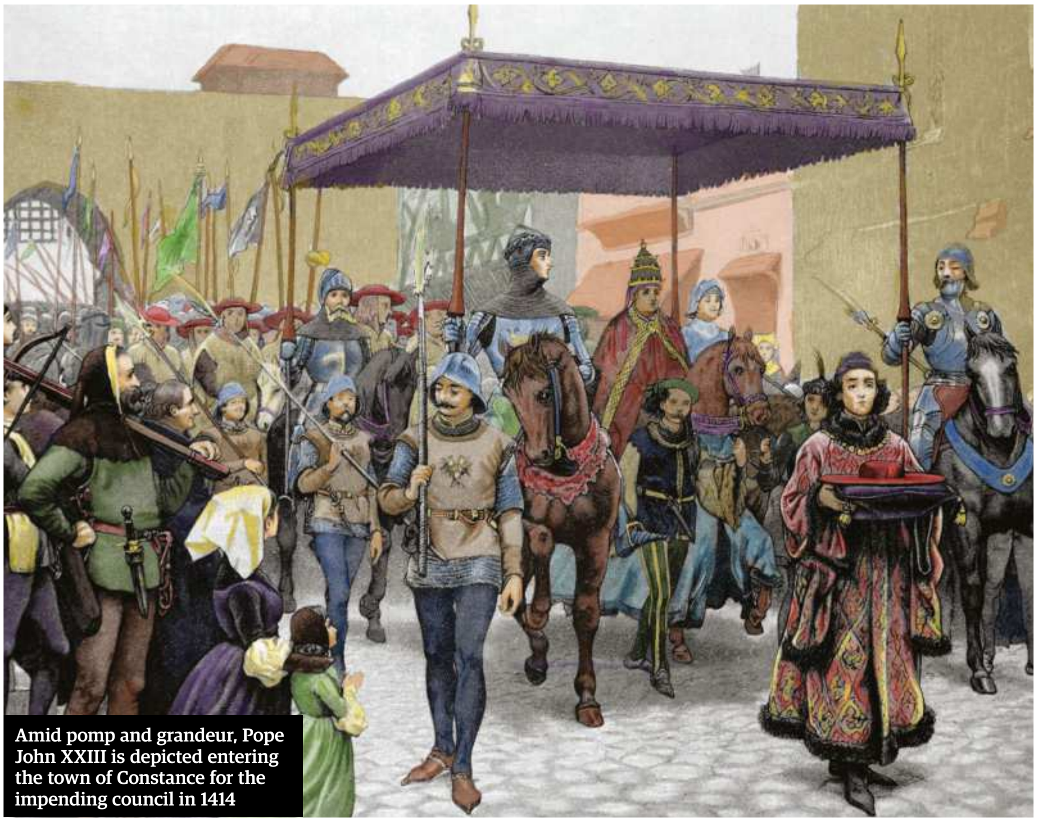
Meanwhile, in 1393, French King Charles VI asked the leaders of the University of Paris to suggest several options to end the schism. A commission of 54 university professors and other leaders deliberated for some time and proposed three approaches. The first would require both claimants to renounce their right to the papal throne for a new beginning. In the event that neither would resign, then the scholars suggested an arbitration process. As a last resort, they proposed convening a general council of cardinals only, or possibly both cardinals and scholars, to determine a rightful pope. The university's overture went nowhere.

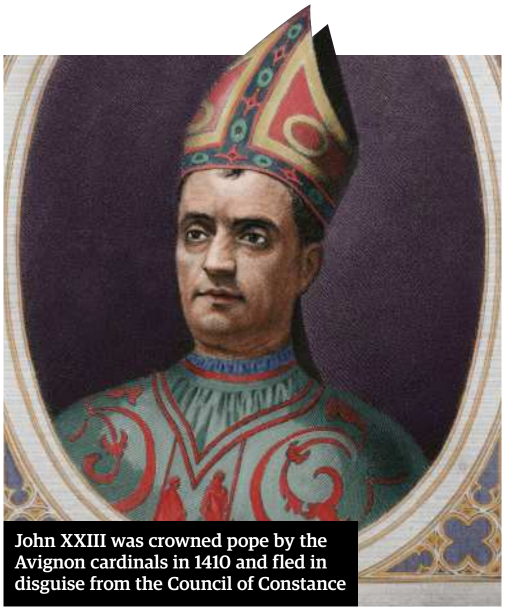
In 1398, the French crown withdrew its support for Benedict XIII, and 17 of his cardinals abandoned the Avignon papal court, leaving only five loyal to him. A French army marched on Avignon and actually laid siege to the papal palace. Benedict escaped in March 1403 and found sanctuary in the lands of a loyal follower, Louis II, Duke of Anjou and former King of Naples. The cardinals of Avignon reversed themselves and once again threw their support to Benedict, who was also popular with the common people. In turn, France and other countries again recognised him as the lawful pope.

Boniface IX died in 1404, and the cardinals in Rome elected Cardinal Cosimo de' Migliorati as Pope Innocent VII. His reign was brief. After his death in 1406, the Roman cardinals then elected Cardinal Angelo Corraro, who became Pope Gregory XII. Both Innocent and Gregory had indicated that they wished to end the schism, but neither made progress with the Avignon papal seat.

In 1407, discussions among the rival cardinals produced an agreement for the simultaneous resignations of both Benedict XIII and Gregory XII. The two were to meet at the town of Savona in northern Italy to make a fresh start. However, neither trusted the other. The two pontiffs backed out prior to the arranged meeting. Gregory XII then reneged on a promise he had made prior to his election and appointed four new cardinals, two of whom were his nephews. His cardinals withdrew their support. The Avignon cardinals dumped Benedict XIII again shortly thereafter.

Apparently fatigued by the intransigence of both Gregory and Benedict, 13 cardinals each from Avignon and Rome agreed to an assembly in the city of Pisa, which convened on 25 March 1409. The rival popes objected and attempted to summon their own assemblies to no avail. Approximately 500 cardinals and church officials were present at the Council of Pisa, which asserted that it had the authority to represent and conduct the business of the church in its entirety. When the popes were summoned to appear before the council, both refused. During its 15th session on 5 June, the Council deposed Gregory and Benedict on


Amid pomp and grandeur, Pope John XXIII is depicted entering the town of Constance for the impending council in 1414


John XXIII was crowned pope by the Avignon cardinals in 1410 and fled in disguise from the Council of Constance

"As the schism persisted, the legitimacy of the papacy suffered considerably, and the anxiety of the faithful continued"

the grounds that they were "schismatical, heretical, perjured, and scandalous".

Although it appeared that progress was being made, the Council of Pisa went a step further by electing yet another pope, a former supporter of Urban VI, Cardinal Pietro di Candia, who became Alexander V. Most of Europe recognised Alexander V as pope, but the schism was far from over since neither the Avignon nor the Roman Pope would agree to abdicate. As the schism persisted, the legitimacy of the papacy suffered considerably, and the anxiety of the faithful continued to grow. Alexander V died in 1410 and was succeeded by Cardinal Baldassarre Cossa, who took the name Pope John XXIII.

Three years later, Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund prevailed upon John XXIII to convene an assembly at the town of Constance on the Swiss frontier in southern Germany. The Council of Constance then convened on 5 November 1414, with the expressed purposes of ending the schism and initiating church reforms. Hundreds of religious leaders attended, but John XXIII expected to be deposed and fled in the hopes that the council would collapse without his presence. Sigismund petitioned the gathering to remain in session, and in the spring of 1415 the Council of Constance deposed John XXIII and successfully secured the abdication of Gregory XII. Benedict XIII refused to comply and was subsequently deposed in July 1417.

The Council of Constance established the doctrine that the pope was not an absolute monarch

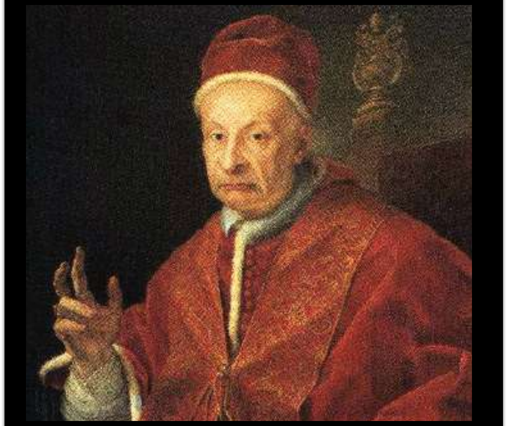
Twenty-three cardinals and delegates from England, France, Italy, Germany and Spain elected Cardinal Otto Colonna as Pope Martin V on 11 November 1417, finally ending the schism. However, Benedict XIII insisted that he was pope until his death in 1423, when a diehard group of cardinals actually elected yet another successor, who took the name Clement VIII. Finally, in 1429, Clement VIII recognised Martin V as the true Pope.

As a result of the schism, the singular authority of the pope was weakened and many church leaders ascribed to the conciliar theory, that the general council held supreme authority. The extended period of uncertainty in the Catholic Church also contributed to the emergence of the Protestant Reformation.

The persistence of Benedict

When Benedict XIII refused to abdicate his claim to the papacy in 1415, Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund called an assembly at the town of Perpignan in the mountains of southern France. Sigismund was joined by representatives of the English, Hungarian and French crowns, delegates from numerous other principalities, and King Ferdinand I of Aragon in an effort to persuade Benedict to relent. The effort ended in frustration, and after nearly six weeks Sigismund left Perpignan on 5 November. Benedict was formally excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church on 27 July 1417, and fled Perpignan for Peniscola in the Kingdom of Aragon in modern northwest Spain.

Aragon was alone in its continuing recognition of Benedict XIII as the true pope, and King Alfonso V, successor to Ferdinand I, provided sanctuary until Benedict died on 23 May 1423. Stubborn to the end, Benedict appointed four cardinals on the day before his death and charged them with electing a successor in the Avignon papal line. Three of these cardinals met in June and elected Pope Clement VIII. The fourth cardinal had been absent during the meeting and individually declared its action invalid. Further, he elected his own pope, who took the name of Benedict XIV, sparking a short-lived schism in itself.


Pope Benedict XIII stubbornly refused to abdicate and claimed to be the rightful pope of the Catholic Church until his death

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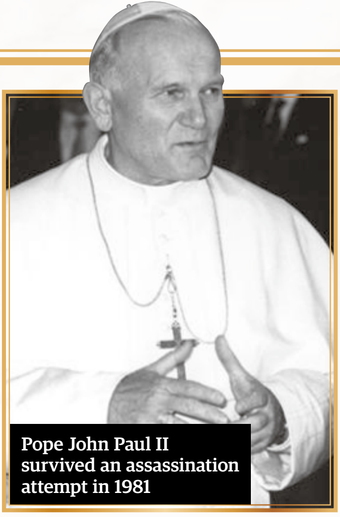
The 10 most important popes

From crowning kings to starting wars, discover the legacies left behind by some of the Catholic Church's most influential popes



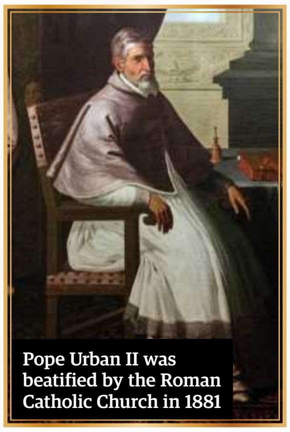
Pope John Paul II survived an assassination attempt in 1981

John Paul II

Nationality: Polish

Reign: 1978-2005

After being elected in 1978, John Paul II became the first non-Italian pope in over 400 years and set about spreading his message of faith and peace the world over. He became the most widely travelled pope in history, visiting more than 100 countries during his 27-year papal reign, and used his influence to effect political change. He regularly reached out to other faiths, preached about human rights and is often credited with being instrumental in the fall of communism in his native Poland. His influence was recognised nine years after his death when he was canonised as a saint in 2014.



Pope Urban II was beatified by the Roman Catholic Church in 1881

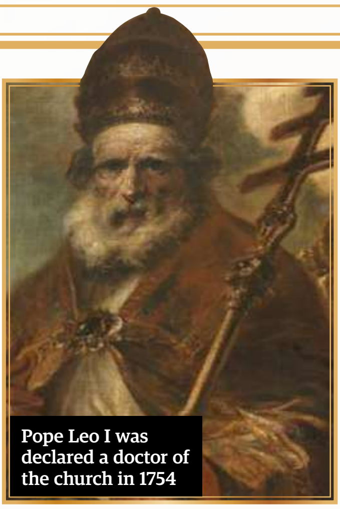
Pope Urban II

Nationality: French

Reign: 1088-1099

With a cry of 'Deus vult', meaning 'God wills it', Pope Urban II called all the Christians in Europe to war against the Muslims in an effort to reclaim the Holy Land. His rousing speech in 1095 launched the first Crusade, one of seven military campaigns fought over the next two centuries. He was asked to rally the people by Byzantine Emperor Alexios I, who feared the Turks were about to take Constantinople, but seized the opportunity as a way to reinforce his power and unite Christian Europe. More than 60,000 people answered his call and marched to Jerusalem to take back the Holy City.

Pope Urban II died two weeks after the Christians triumphed in Jerusalem but before the news of the victory reached him in Europe



Pope Leo I was declared a doctor of the church in 1754

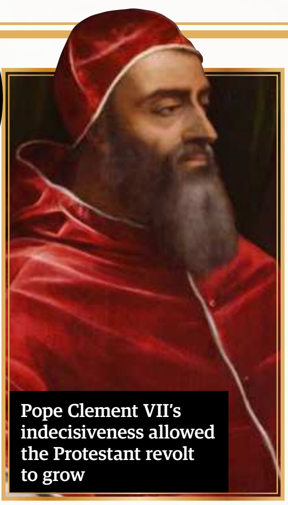
Pope Leo I

Nationality: Roman/Italian

Reign: 440-461

The first pope to have been labelled 'the Great', Leo I dedicated much of his papal reign to safeguarding the beliefs and practices of the Christian faith. He wrote 432 letters, 96 sermons and his celebrated Tome on the subject, believing that papal power was granted by Christ to St Peter alone and passed on to his successors. The Council of Chalcedon, whose ruling clarified the orthodox doctrine, declared Leo's Tome the ultimate truth. He also enhanced the prestige of the papacy by convincing feared nomadic leader Attila the Hun not to attack Rome in 452.

Pope Leo I was well known for his writing skills, and his rhythmic prose style, called cursus leonicus, influenced ecclesiastical language for centuries



Pope Clement VII's indecisiveness allowed the Protestant revolt to grow

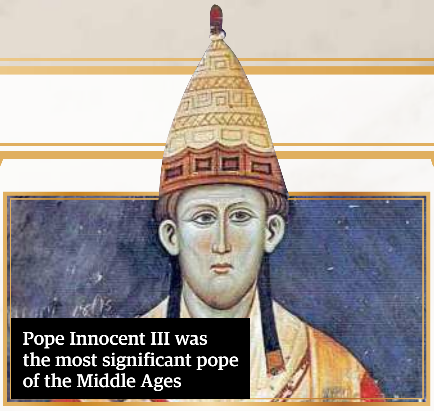
Pope Clement VII

Nationality: Italian

Reign: 1523-1534

A lot happened during Clement VII's 11-year papal reign, which was dominated by the spread of the Protestant Reformation. Firstly, his constantly shifting support between King Francis I of France and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in their fight to dominate Europe ultimately led to the sack of Rome in 1527. Imprisoned by Charles V, he was asked by King Henry VIII to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, but as she was Charles's aunt he was forced to refuse. This led to England's break with Rome in 1534 and the establishment of the Church of England.

Pope Clement VII grew a full beard as a sign of mourning for the sack of Rome, a tradition observed by each of the 24 popes who succeeded him



Pope Innocent III was the most significant pope of the Middle Ages

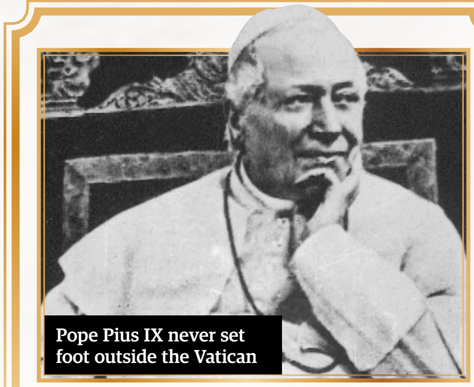
Pope Innocent III

Nationality: Italian

Reign: 1198-1216

One of the most powerful popes in history, Pope Innocent III achieved a great deal during his reign. He greatly expanded the pope's authority over the Christian states of Europe, granting himself supremacy over their kings, and campaigned tirelessly to eradicate heresy in Italy and southern France. He also launched the Fourth Crusade on the Holy Land, although this ended in disaster when Constantinople was sacked instead. Perhaps his greatest achievement was his reformation of the church. In 1215 he presided over the Fourth Lateran Council and refined Western canon law.

In 1215, Pope Innocent III annulled the Magna Carta on the grounds that it was 'illegal, unjust, harmful to royal rights and shameful to the English people'



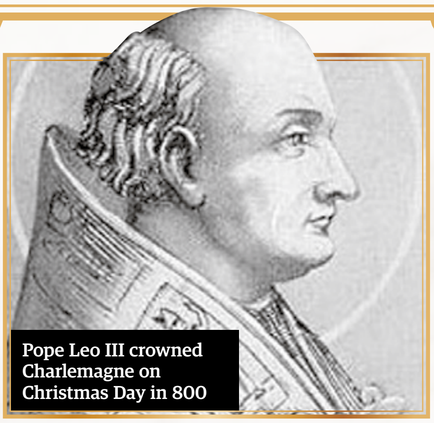
Pope Pius IX never set foot outside the Vatican

Pope Pius IX

Nationality: Italian

Reign: 1846-1878

Pope Pius IX was not only the longest-reigning pope in history, with a papacy lasting over 31 years, but also the last pope to hold temporal power. During his reign, nationalist armies seized the Papal States and Rome, leaving only the Vatican under papal control. As a result, Pius IX convened the First Vatican Council which defined the dogma of papal infallibility, ensuring the pope had the final word on all issues relating to faith, morals and spirituality.



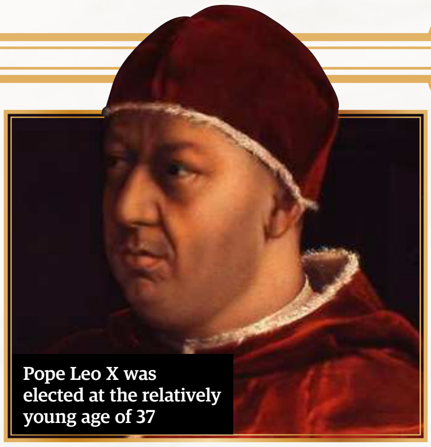
Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne on Christmas Day in 800

Pope Leo III

Nationality: Roman/Italian

Reign: 795-816

Pope Leo III is best known for crowning Charlemagne the first Holy Roman Emperor in the year 800, an act that established the pope as the only person who could bestow the imperial crown. The surprise coronation was mutually beneficial for the church and state as Charlemagne's new title placed him under the command of the pope, ensuring Leo III protection, while the new emperor gained the authority to unite the Germanic peoples and encourage the intellectual revival of Europe.



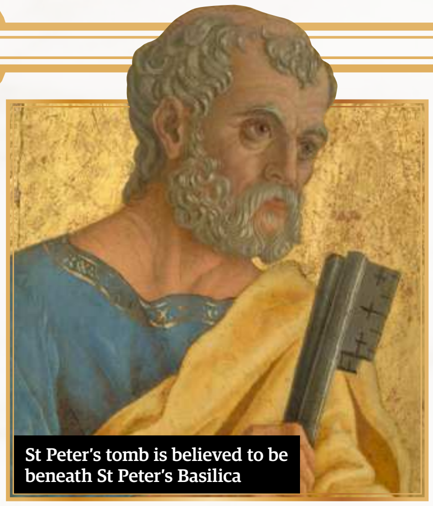
Pope Leo X was elected at the relatively young age of 37

Pope Leo X

Nationality: Italian

Reign: 1513-1521

The extravagant spending of Pope Leo X unwittingly caused the Protestant Reformation and dissolution of the Western church. Having drained the papal treasury in just two years by accelerating the construction of St Peter's Basilica and investing heavily in the arts, Leo X began to sell indulgences to raise funds. When Martin Luther objected to this 'selling of salvation', the pope excommunicated him, but the monk's teachings had already spread across Europe and later sparked the Peasants' War.



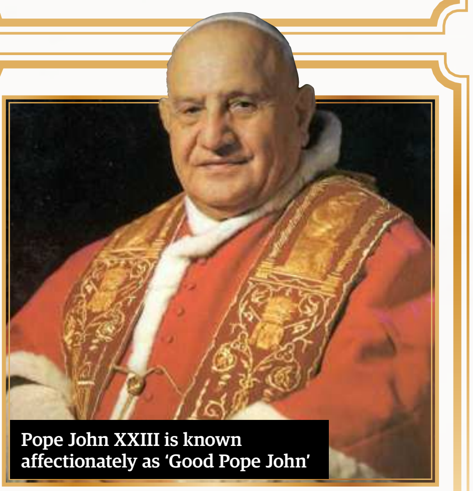
St Peter's tomb is believed to be beneath St Peter's Basilica

St Peter

Nationality: Israeli

Reign: c.30-67 CE

The very first pope was fisherman Simon Peter, who became one of Jesus Christ's 12 Apostles. As the shepherd of the flock, he was given the keys to the kingdom of heaven, with those keys remaining a symbol of the pope's authority to this day. He was never officially given the title of pope during his lifetime but every pope since is considered his successor, and the papal enclave, St Peter's Basilica, is named after him.



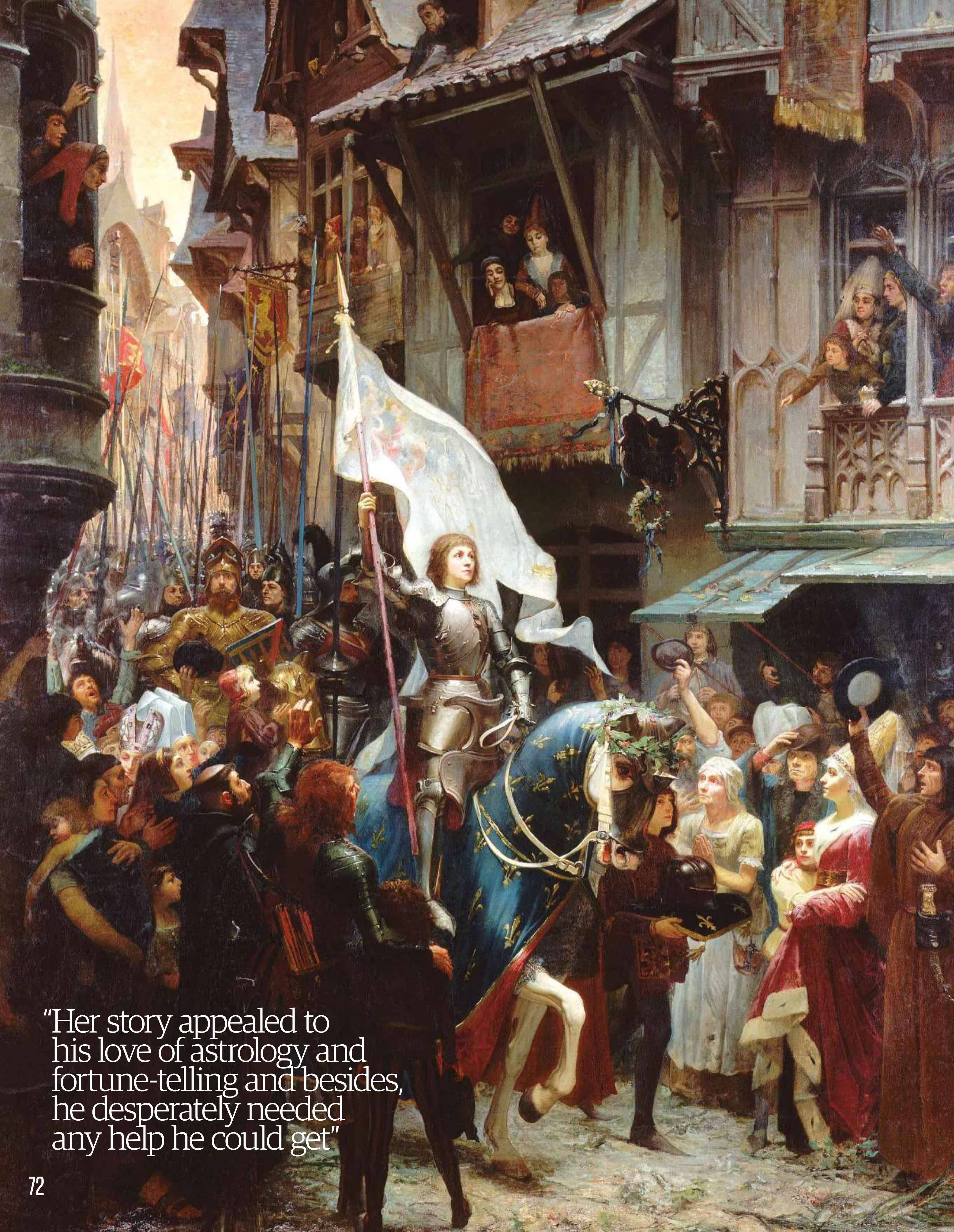
Pope John XXIII is known affectionately as 'Good Pope John'

Pope John XXIII

Nationality: Italian

Reign: 1958-1963

Elected as an interim pope aged 76, John XXIII wasn't expected to have a particularly long or significant reign. However, in 1962 he called the Second Vatican Council to address relations between the Catholic Church and the modern world, starting a new era in its history. Sadly he died before the council could be completed, but his efforts helped to greatly modernise the church and earned him beatification and canonisation in the years after his death.



“Her story appealed to his love of astrology and fortune-telling and besides, he desperately needed any help he could get”

Joan of Arc

The teenage martyr who led the French army and put the fear of God into the English

A young woman whose faith led her to challenge kings and inspire armies, Joan of Arc's devout belief that God had appointed her to lead the French to victory against the British drove her from the village of her birth and onto the battlefield. In her brief time she became a national figurehead; a symbol. It was an image she cultivated and encouraged and one that would ultimately lead to her death.

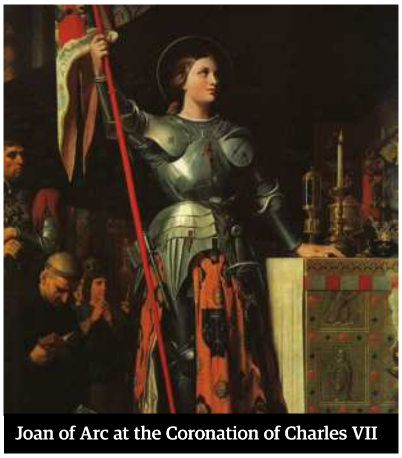
Flames secured Joan's martyrdom, just as they provoked her fierce patriotism. Jehanne D'Arc, or la Pucelle (the Maid) as she came to be known, was born in 1412 in the village of Domrémy, located across the river from Burgundy territory. The Burgundians, allies of the British, regularly attacked French territory. In July 1428, Joan's family fled a raid and returned to find the enemy had burned their town, fields and church. Joan had heard angelic voices since the age of 12 or 13, urging her to remain pious, but now they gave her a specific mission. The voices of Archangel Michael, St Catherine and St Margaret directed her to go into France and find her king, the Dauphin Charles.

She claimed to have her first vision at the age of 12, when St Catherine, St Michael and St Margaret appeared to her in a field

The alliance between Britain and Burgundy had kept Charles from claiming the French crown. His enemies not only occupied Paris, but also held the city of Reims, where coronations took place. The crown would have to wait, however, as the French city of Orléans was currently in the grip of a protracted siege. Orléans needed help and Joan believed she was the one to deliver it. On 13 May 1428, the sixteen-year-old arrived in Vaucouleurs and begged Robert de Baudricourt, the captain of the garrison, to give her a military escort to Charles' court at Chinon. Baudricourt replied that she should be taken home and beaten. However, Joan would not be deterred and returned in January the next year.

She claimed she was the subject of a prophecy from 1398, about a maid who would "deliver the kingdom of France from the enemy." Baudricourt turned her down again, but her efforts were gaining traction. She gained favour with local nobility, particularly the Duke of Lorraine. Although Joan refused to attempt to cure his gout, the Duke agreed to give her a small escort and in February she travelled in men's clothes to Chinon, where she was presented to the court.

Charles was cautious but curious. Taking advice from a mad heretic could be devastating to his campaign, but her story appealed to his love of astrology and fortune-telling and besides, he desperately needed any help he could get. Joan immediately picked him out from the crowd and pledged her allegiance: "Most illustrious Lord Dauphin, I come and am sent from God to give assistance to you and the kingdom." He was impressed, but ordered she be tested before giving any official credence to her claims. One of the key figures in these trials was Yolande of Aragon, one of the true powers behind Charles and an intelligent strategist. After Joan's maidenhood was proved, she faced questions from clergy and theologians and passed with flying colours. Whether or not they truly believed in her voices was irrelevant. Charles now had a messenger of God, and Yolande raised a convoy for this messenger to lead.



Joan of Arc at the Coronation of Charles VII

Life in the time of Joan of Arc

The Black Death

From 1348 to 1350, the Black Death ravaged England, claiming the lives of some 1.5 million people. Carried by fleas, in turn carried by the rats infesting London, the bubonic plague spread through overpopulated towns and cities. England's economy and resources would feel its effects for decades to come.

Emissaries from God

Joan of Arc was not the first woman to claim the heavenly host had spoken to her. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) railed against corruption in the clergy, St Clare of Assisi (1194-1253) claimed to be able to hear and see Mass on the wall of her room when she was too ill to move, and Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) travelled Italy urging states to make peace with Rome.

From bows to cannons

As the Hundred Years' War raged on through the decades, the technology of warfare began to change. The English longbows at Agincourt in 1415 were the difference between victory and defeat, but as open battles were often replaced by lengthy sieges, cannon fire became a deciding factor. By the siege of Orléans both sides deployed cannons.

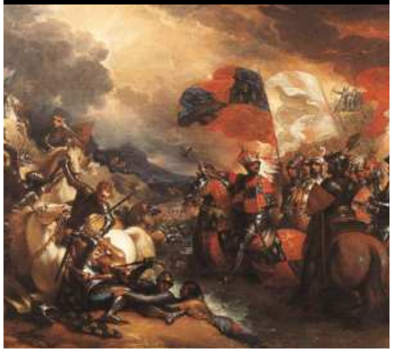
Heresy trials

The definition of heresy covers a great deal of sins, but the term boils down to denying any established Christian dogma. In the Middle Ages, heresy trials became more common and the Catholic Church aggressively pursued any enemies. This continued into the 16th century, with Copernican scholars accused of heresy.

The Bavarian Hussites

Czech religious reformer Jan Huss was burned at the stake in 1415 for heresy. After his death, the Hussite movement was born, separating itself from Rome. The Hussites declared that communion should be given with bread and wine, they believed in poverty of the priesthood, punishment of sinners and freedom of preaching. The Pope announced a crusade against them in 1420.

Edward III, one of the instigators of The Hundred Years' War, crosses the Somme



The Hundred Years' War, 1337-1453

After William the Conqueror defeated Harold at Hastings in 1066 and claimed the English throne, English and Norman territories were combined. It was inevitably difficult to keep control of the taken land. By the reign of English King Edward III in 1327, only Gascony and Pontieu remained. When the French King Charles IV died heirless, Edward believed his mother and Charles' sister Isabella was the next in line, meaning the crown should be his. The French disagreed and chose Charles' cousin Philip. A furious Edward refused to pay homage and when the Philip confiscated his lands in Aquitaine in retaliation, Edward declared war.

The Edwardian era of the Hundred Years' War lasted until 1360. The English captured Philip's successor, King John II, but a compromise wasn't reached until the Treaty of Brétigny, in which Edward agreed to abandon his claim in exchange for Aquitaine and Calais. War resumed in 1369 when Charles V of France responded to Edward the Black Prince refusing his summons by declaring war. Charles successfully reclaimed many of the territories his predecessor lost, and the Black Prince's son Richard II would make peace with Charles VI in 1389. After the truce had been repeatedly extended, war resumed in 1415 when Henry V invaded, leading to decades of conflict during which the English would take Paris and claim kingship. They would not be driven out until the Battle of Castillon in 1453, the official end of the Hundred Years' War.

In April 1429, Joan rode out, holding her white standard and wearing a suit of armour commissioned by Charles. She announced that her sword would be found in the church of Sainte-Catherine-de-Fierbois, hidden behind the altar. It was an old gift to the church from the crusades, and the discovery was treated as a miracle. Her pious conduct became renowned; she forced her soldiers to stop taking the Lord's name in vain and expelled prostitutes from their camps. She dictated letters to the British, instructing them to leave France or face the wrath of God. A canny propagandist, the Dauphin ensured these letters were copied and widely distributed.

However, Joan was still an untested military leader. She arrived at Orléans eager for battle but had not understood that her forces were there as support, nothing more. Although frustrated, she managed to get her men into the city, past the English troops and was rewarded with the adulation of the citizens. They may have been pleased to see her but her impatience to attack was at odds with her fellow commanders' strategy. In her frustration she hurled insults at the English from the battlements.

When an attack was decided upon on 4 May 1428, Joan was not even told by the commanders and woke up as the fight was in progress. She arrived just in time to rally her troops and inspire them to capture their target: the small fortress of Saint-Loup. It was their first victory and Joan's confidence grew. She dictated a fearsome final letter to the English, ordering them to leave, and on 6 May another attack was mounted. Joan led it herself, routing the enemy. She advanced again the next day, claiming to be the first to storm the ramparts at Les Tourelles, where she took an arrow to the shoulder but stayed in the fight. The French commanders credited her for inspiring the troops to victory. Orléans hadn't just been relieved; the English had been routed.

Joan sent many letters to British and Burgundian troops but she was illiterate and had to dictate them

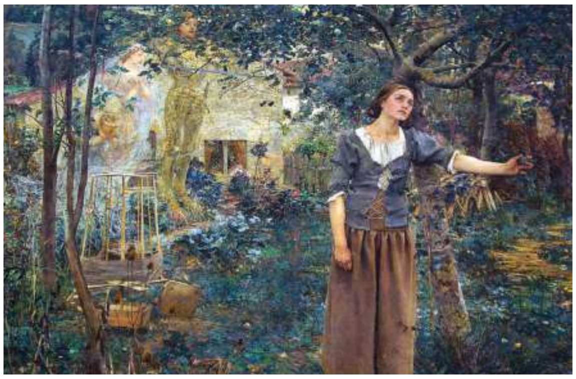
With Orléans free, Joan wanted Charles to proceed immediately to Reims but the Dauphin was more cautious. He wanted to clear the Loire valley and began raising money for the campaign. It would be a month before Joan would see combat again. Technically, the young Duke of Alençon led the army but he was a firm believer in the young female warrior and frequently deferred to her. They swept quickly through the English resistance and laid siege to Beaugency. The English surrendered without realising a relief force was on its way, a force the French promptly set off after. They met at Patay on 18 June, where the ill-prepared English were decimated, with over 2,000 dead and all but one

"She dictated a fearsome final letter to the English, ordering them to leave, and on 6 May another attack was mounted. Joan led the attack herself, routing the enemy"

Defining moment

First vision 1424

At just 12 or 13 years old, she first claims to hear the voices of angels speaking to her. At first, the voices tell her to 'govern' her conduct. If she feels she had not behaved properly, the voices would admonish her. They also tell her to reject the marriage her family had arranged for her. Joan soon identifies the main voice as Michael, the archangel who led the battle against Satan in the Book of Revelation. As Joan grows older, Michael's messages continue to advise her toward piety, but gradually grow more political. Finally, Michael and the other voices, those of St Catherine and St Margaret, tell her to travel to France and begin her mission.



Timeline

1412

Birth of a warrior
Joan is born to a farming family in the town of Domrémy. She never receives formal education or how to read and write, instead learning about religion from her mother Isabelle.
1412

Domrémy burns
The territory across the river from Domrémy is Burgundian, and a raid into French territory proves a defining moment for Joan. Her family flees to Neufchateau and returns to find the enemy having burnt their town.
1428

Journey to Vaucouleurs
In 1428 Joan's voices tell her to travel to France and talk to the dauphin Charles. She travels to Vaucouleurs to demand an escort, beginning a series of attempts ending in success after convincing nobles that she is the fulfilment of a prophecy.
May 1428

Audience with the king
Joan is granted a meeting with the Dauphin Charles, who sees value in her for his military campaign to free Orléans. Joan immediately identifies him in a room full of people and impresses him with her fervour.
6 March 1429

The sword is found
After convincing the clergy and theologians of her maidenhood and her gift, Joan is allowed to lead a force to Orléans. She announces that her sword can be found in the church of Saint Catherine-de-Fierbois, which it is.
April 1429

senior officer captured. Joan played little part in it but by this point that mattered not, as her legend only grew stronger. By now, Charles was ready to head for Reims and the coronation. He led a grand procession, entered the city on 16 July and was crowned the next day as Joan looked on proudly. She was desperate for the king to attack Paris but he chose to leave Reims instead, only to be barred from crossing the Seine by English troops. Joan was ecstatic as she saw the only possible answer was an attack on Paris.

After skirmishes throughout August and a truce with Burgundy, on 8 September Joan finally led the Paris attack she has been itching for. She stood on the moat, demanding surrender, but the only reply she received was an English arrow through her leg. After hours of constant bombardment, her men reached her under the cover of darkness, but she was determined to continue the fight the next day. However, once Charles saw the number of French casualties he ordered her to return to his side.

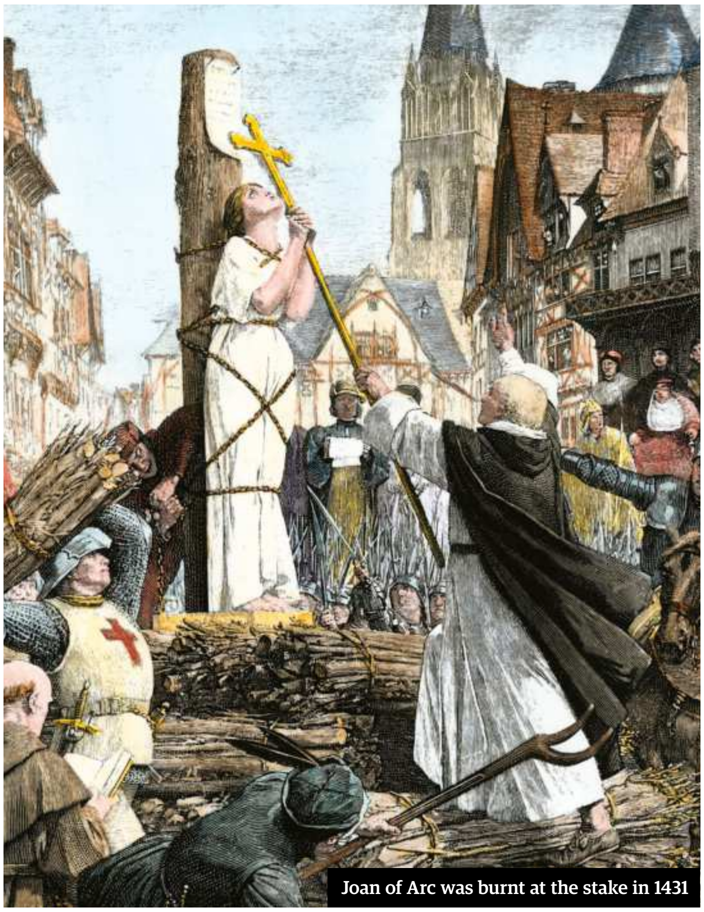
The attack had failed and Joan's usefulness was now suddenly cast into doubt. She needed a victory to restore her reputation but in November 1429 failed to take the castle of La Charité after a long siege. On return to court, Charles gave her hereditary nobility but made sure she stayed with him, which frustrated Joan. It was her duty to be on the battlefield.

By 1430, the English were preparing a full-scale invasion of France to reclaim their lost territory. When the city of Compiègne refused to surrender, Joan rode to support them without Charles' authorisation. On 23 May she led an attack from the city, but the English reinforcements cut her off at the rear and she could not retreat. She was pulled from her horse and forced to surrender to the Burgundians. She testified that constant sexual harassment was the reason she remained in men's clothing, while the voices in her head told her not to escape. Defying them, she leapt from the tower but was injured in the fall and recaptured.

> Joan dressed in men's clothes, claiming the spirits told her to. She also wore her hair short, but this is often not depicted in portraits

The English needed to make an example of Joan and the Parisian theologians wanted to try her for heresy, idolatry and witchcraft. She needed to answer for the way in which she had circumvented the church by claiming to receive her instructions from her 'voices' while her ability to inspire followers had to be stopped. If she were convicted by a foreign power the damage to Charles' reputation would be severe, so the French court paid the Duke of Burgundy £10,000 for her.

Six rounds of questioning took place between 21 February and 3 March 1431, with nine more between 10 and 17 March. Joan never changed her story. On 24 May, she was taken to the scaffold and told that if she did not abjure, she would be given to the secular authorities that would carry out her death sentence. Joan wavered as the sentence began to be read out. She recanted and was sentenced to life imprisonment and to wear women's clothes.

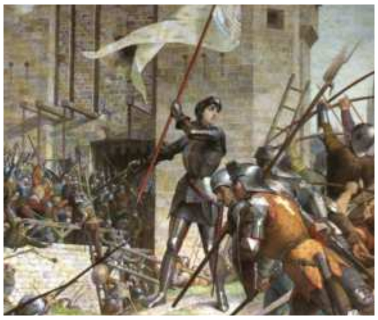

Joan of Arc was burnt at the stake in 1431

Two days later Joan changed her mind. Demanding she be allowed to attend mass, Joan was found in men's clothes, claiming the voices had told her that her abjuration was treason. Now the only possible outcome was her execution. On 30 May she was allowed to make her confession and take communion before she was taken to the Old Market in Rouen and tied to the stake. She was given a small crucifix and a Dominican priest held a parish cross high so she could see it even as the flames began to lick around her. The young warrior who had led her country to such great victories over the English cried out, "Jesus!" repeatedly before leaving this world. The king she had helped crown, Charles VII, not once tried to help Joan throughout her ordeal. She was merely a tool that had stopped being useful. However, the legend of Jehanne la Pucelle only grew stronger with time. In 1456, after a lengthy investigation, the sentence was annulled and in 1920, Joan of Arc was canonised by Pope Benedict XV. She is now a saint.

Defining moment

Siege of Orléans 29 April-8 May 1429

Joan arrives at Orléans amid great fanfare from the citizens of the city but is met with indifference by her fellow commanders. She is determined to mount an attack as soon as possible but is told they would wait for a relief effort. She is so poorly regarded by the other generals that when a sortie takes place, she's not told beforehand. Instead, she races out and joins the attack just in time to rally the flagging troops, ultimately claiming a fortress. This will be the first in a series of victories that would liberate Orléans and confirm her status for many as a heaven-sent hero.



1456

Charles is crowned
After swiftly clearing the Loire region of English resistance, Charles finally travels to Reims where he is crowned King Charles VII of France. The coronation fulfils another part of the prophecy of Joan's voices.
17 July 1429

A failed siege
Following Charles' coronation, Joan is convinced that Paris will fall. However, the siege fails as 1,500 men fall to the English bombardment, with Joan herself wounded, having to be pulled from the battlefield under nightfall.
8 September 1429

Capture
While leading an unsanctioned relief effort of Compiègne, Joan decides to attack the Burgundian troops surrounding the city. She is cut off by the English and pulled from her horse while trying to escape.
23 March 1430

Trial
Needing to regain superiority, the church interrogates Joan, telling her she can abjure or face a secular court that will execute her. She retracts her statement, only to change her mind days later, stating she'd rather die than deny what she knows to be true.
9 January-24 May 1431

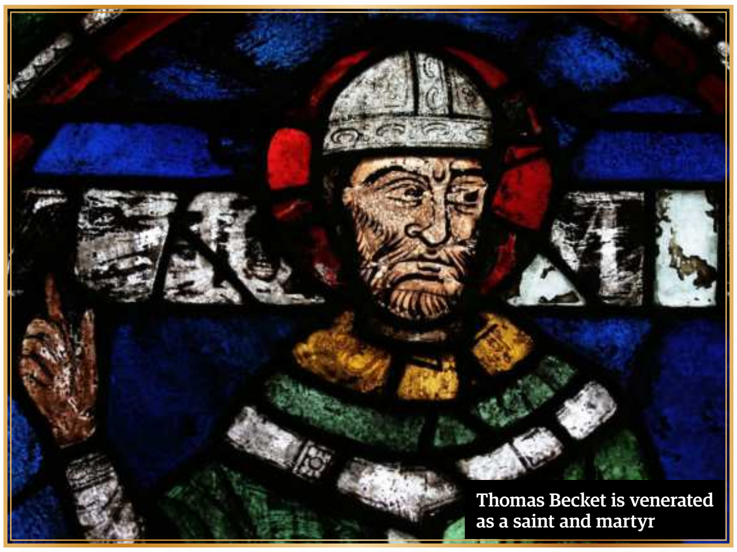
Burned to death
Having recanted her abjuration, Joan is sentenced to be burned at the stake. A Dominican priest holds a cross up high enough for her to see from the flames. She calls out "Jesus!" several times as she burns to death.
30 May 1431

Late justice
Charles orders that Joan's trial be investigated, a proceeding taking roughly six years to complete. Finally, in 1456, the original verdict is annulled, deciding the process had been unjust.
1456

© Corbis; Alamy

Famous saints and martyrs

Elevated above the status of Christian nobility are those recognised for their extraordinary deeds, selfless conduct and giving their lives in defence of their faith


Thomas Becket is venerated as a saint and martyr

Saint Thomas Becket

Nationality: English
Born: 1118
Died: 1170

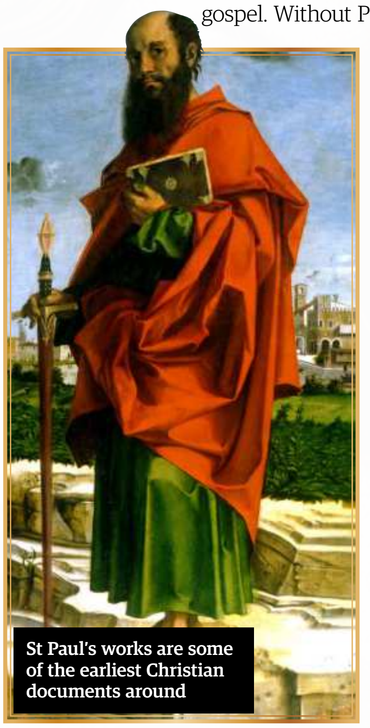
Born into a merchant class family, Thomas Becket soon climbed the ranks working under Theobald, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Becket had proven his talents on several missions to Rome and as a reward Theobald named him Archdeacon of Canterbury and later recommended him to King Henry II as Lord Chancellor. In this role, Becket proved to be a skilled diplomat and earned the trust of the king. The two became close friends but when Theobald died and Henry nominated Becket as Archbishop, their relationship was put under strain. Becket took his new role very seriously and went against the king's efforts to reform the church. Their disagreements eventually forced Becket to flee to France where he remained in exile for six years. When he returned they fell out again, and perhaps in frustration, Henry issued a plea to his court that suggested he wanted Becket killed. Four of his knights took the message literally and stormed into Canterbury Cathedral to murder the Archbishop. His tomb there became a popular site of pilgrimage and in 1173 Becket was canonised by Pope Alexander III. The following year Henry did penance at the Cathedral and ended his feud with the church.

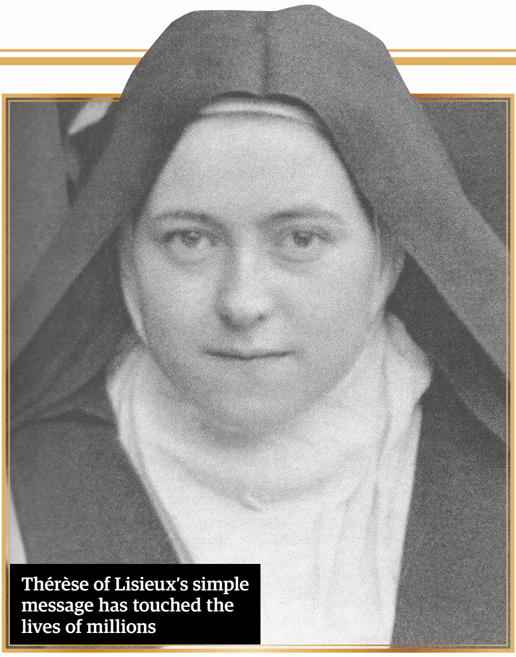
Saint Paul the Apostle

Nationality: Turkish
Born: 5 CE
Died: 67 CE

St Paul was a skilled writer who wrote 13 of the 27 books of the Bible and is also the hero of the Acts of Apostles

Paul may not have been one of Jesus's 12 Apostles but he is an incredibly important figure in Christianity. As a young man he was a tent maker called Saul and also a Pharisee, a member of an ancient Jewish sect that often persecuted the Christian movement. However, while travelling one day on the road to Damascus, he underwent a dramatic conversion. A bright light that left him temporarily blind convinced him that Jesus was, in fact, the messiah. He soon changed his name to Paul and began travelling around the Mediterranean preaching the Christian gospel. Without Paul's teachings, it is widely believed that Christianity would never have become the worldwide faith it is today, but at that time he wasn't always well-received. In Jerusalem, he was arrested for 'defiling a temple' by taking gentiles into it and after a series of trials he was imprisoned and sent to Rome where he spent the rest of his life. It is not known exactly when or how Paul died, but some believe he may have been one of the Christians executed under the order of Emperor Nero following the Great Fire of Rome.


St Paul's works are some of the earliest Christian documents around



Thérèse of Lisieux's simple message has touched the lives of millions

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

Nationality: French
Born: 1873
Died: 1897

Described by Pope Pius X as "the greatest saint of modern times", Thérèse of Lisieux only really became well-known after her untimely death. Born into a deeply religious family, she had followed in the footsteps of her older sisters to become a nun, overcoming various obstacles to enter a Carmelite convent at the early age of 15. There she led a discreet life and followed the strict rules of her faith, eventually succumbing to tuberculosis aged just 24. A year later her autobiography, titled *l'Histoire d'une Âme* or *The Story of a Soul*, was published and became phenomenally popular. In it, she detailed her simple and practical approach to spiritual life, which she referred to as her 'little way'. She believed that small ordinary actions done with extraordinary love were more important than great deeds done for personal glory and referred to herself as "the Little Flower of Jesus", growing unnoticed by the greater population yet giving glory to God. In 1925 she was canonised by Pope Pius XI and in 1997 she also became the youngest person to be designated a doctor of the church. Then, in 2015, her parents became the first spouses to be canonised as a couple.

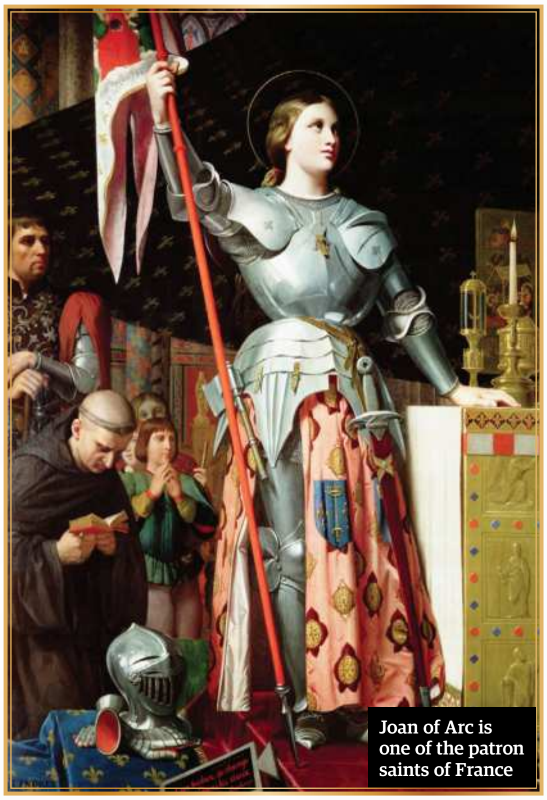
Remains and relics of Thérèse of Lisieux, which are credited with promoting healing and reconciliation, have toured the world and even travelled into space

Mother Teresa won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979

Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Nationality: Albanian-Indian
Born: 1910
Died: 1997

Born Anjezë Gonxha Bojaxhiu, the young girl who would later become known as Mother Teresa felt a strong calling from God while growing up in what is now Macedonia. When she turned 18, she left her family to join the Sisters of Loreto in Ireland and after a few months training was sent on a mission to India. There she became a nun and taught at St Mary's High School in Calcutta, but couldn't ignore the suffering she observed outside the convent walls. Having experienced a second calling to help the city's poor, she asked for permission to leave the convent and work in the slums. Relying only on charitable donations she started an open-air school for the poor and in 1950 founded the Missionaries of Charity, an order that now operates in over 100 countries and has grown to include more than 4,500 nuns and 400 brothers. She was canonised in 2016.



Joan of Arc is one of the patron saints of France

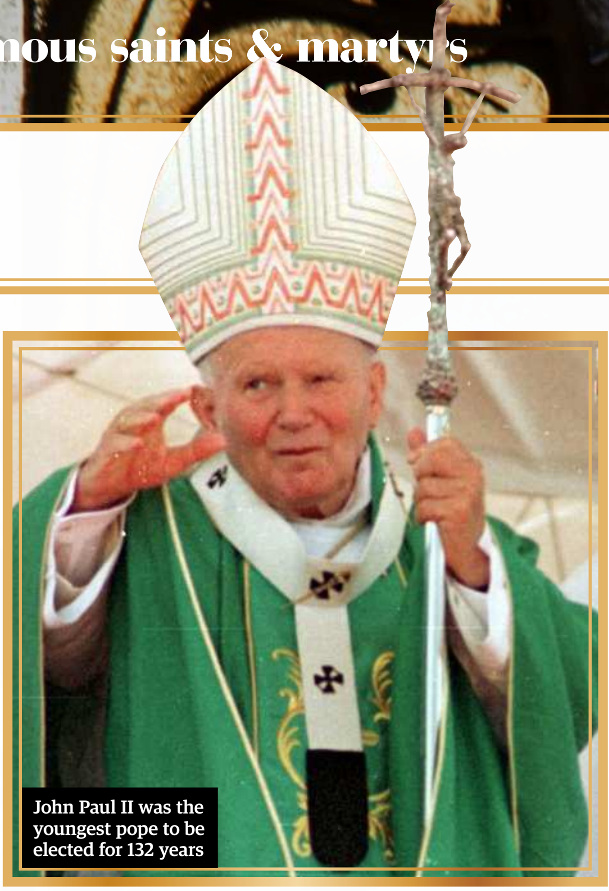
Saint Joan of Arc

Nationality: French
Born: 1412
Died: 1431

Although her life was cut short, Joan of Arc became a national heroine of her native France when she triumphed in battle aged just 17. As a deeply religious young girl, she believed that she had heard the voices of saints telling her that God wanted her to save France by driving out the English. At the time, Henry VI was the ruler of both England and France and Joan's village was under threat of invasion. Determined to install Charles of Valois as the rightful king of France, Joan eventually made it to the crown prince's palace and persuaded him to grant her an army. Dressed in white armour and with her hair cut short, she led several assaults against the Anglo-Burgundians, forcing them to retreat. The incredible victory led her and her followers to escort Charles to Reims where he was crowned King Charles VII. He ordered Joan to lead more assaults on the enemy, but while defending the town of Compiégne she fell from her horse and was captured. She was put on trial accused of witchcraft and heresy, and was burned at the stake aged just 19. She was canonised by Pope Benedict XV in 1920.

> "In God's name! Let us go on bravely" – Joan of Arc

Joan of Arc had a volatile temper and would often reprimand her knights for swearing, behaving indecently, skipping Mass or dismissing her battle plans

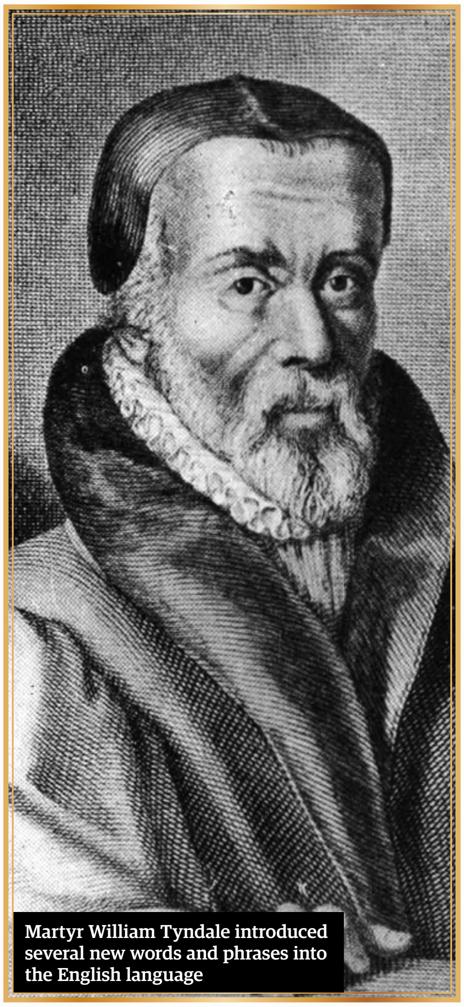

John Paul II was the youngest pope to be elected for 132 years

Pope Saint John Paul II

Nationality: Polish
Born: 1920
Died: 2005

When Pope John Paul I died in 1978, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła was quite far down the list of people expected to be appointed his successor. He was relatively young for the position at 58, and he wasn't Italian, but to the shock of Catholics worldwide he was chosen for the papacy. Taking the name John Paul II, the new pope was seen as a dynamic and charismatic preacher and reached out to many different faiths and world leaders during his reign. Having been present for the Second Vatican Council, he was passionate about restoring strong authority to the church and took a firm stance against communism, violence and poverty. However, he also proved inflexible in his opposition to contraception, abortion and homosexuality, which earnt him many critics. He was determined to travel the world to spread his message, but it was while addressing crowds in Vatican City that he was shot by a Turkish political extremist. After a long recovery, he forgave the gunman and went on to survive another assassination attempt a year later. He eventually died aged 84 and was declared a saint in 2014.

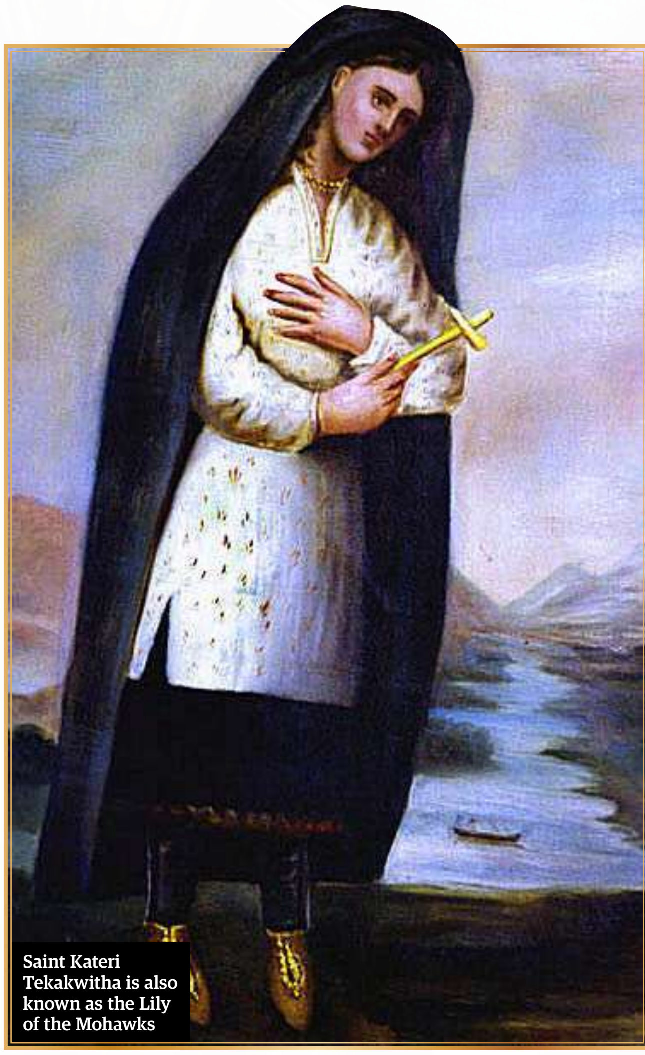
Pope John Paul II issued many public apologies for the church's wrongdoings, including its inactivity during the Holocaust and its denigration of women

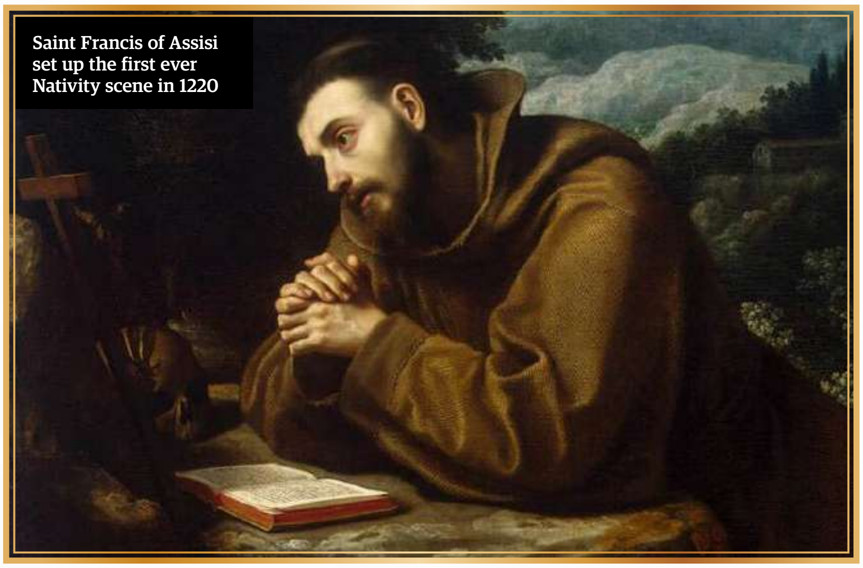

Martyr William Tyndale introduced several new words and phrases into the English language

William Tyndale

Nationality: English
Born: 1494
Died: 1536

Believing that the Bible, not the pope, should determine church doctrine and that everyone should be able to read Christ's teachings in their own language, priest William Tyndale made it his mission to translate the New Testament into English. This was strictly forbidden at the time and so he fled to Germany to work in secret, eventually publishing his translation in 1525. He was soon accused of heresy by the church and forced into hiding, where he began working on a second translation, this time of the Old Testament. When the English Reformation began in 1534 and King Henry VIII separated from Rome, Tyndale thought it was safe to work more openly but he was soon betrayed to the imperial authorities by his friend Henry Phillips. He was tried and convicted of heresy and treason then strangled and burned at the stake, but the legacy of his work lives on.


Saint Kateri Tekakwitha is also known as the Lily of the Mohawks



Saint Francis of Assisi set up the first ever Nativity scene in 1220

St Francis of Assisi

Nationality: Italian
Born: 1181
Died: 1226

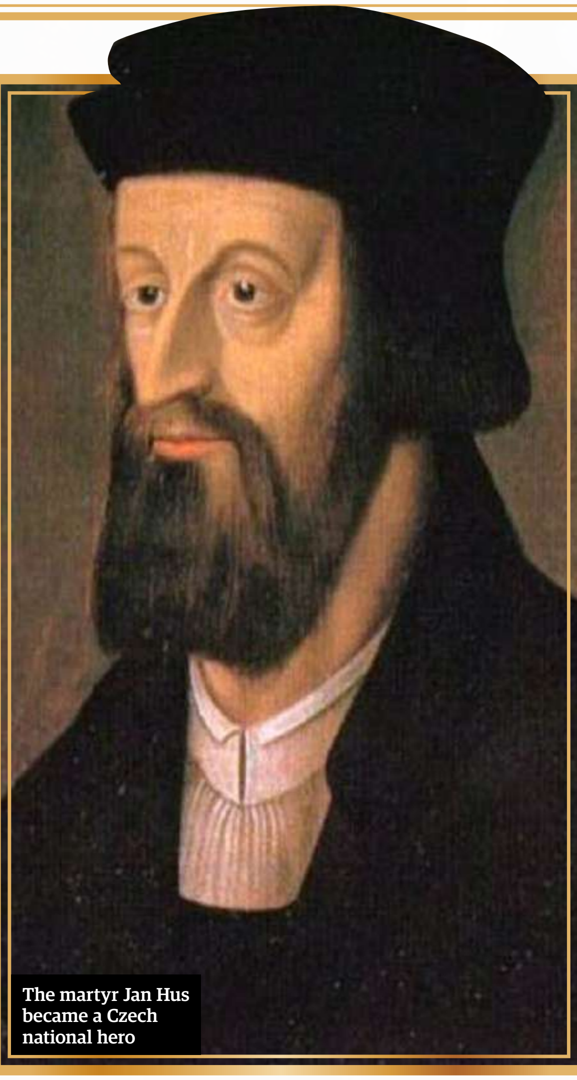
In his youth, Francis was renowned for partying, drinking and living in luxury and was expected to follow in his father's footsteps to become a successful businessman. However, when war broke out between Assisi and Perugia, he was captured and imprisoned for ransom, where he began to see visions from God. These visions told him to help the poor and repair the church and, as a result, he abandoned his wealth and devoted himself to Christianity. He began preaching around Assisi and drew thousands of followers, eventually founding the Franciscan Order of Friars. In 1224, Francis reportedly received a vision that left him with the stigmata of Christ - marks resembling Jesus's wounds after the crucifixion. Two years after his death he was canonised and, because of his love of nature, was declared the patron saint of animals and ecology.

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

Nationality: American
Born: 1656
Died: 1680

In 2012, Kateri Tekakwitha became the first Native American to be canonised by the Roman Catholic Church. She was born more than 300 years earlier in the village of Ossernenon, which is now upstate New York, to a Mohawk father and Catholic mother, but lost them both to smallpox when she was four. She survived with facial scarring and impaired sight, which inspired her name Tekakwitha meaning "the one who walks groping her way", and became influenced by some visiting Jesuit missionaries. Aged 20 she was baptised into the Catholic Church against the wishes of her Mohawk uncle and fled to a missionary village near Montreal. There she took a lifetime vow of chastity and subjected herself to harsh penances, which included placing hot coals between her toes. When she died aged 24, it is said that the scars on her face vanished entirely and she has been attributed to many other miracles since.

"I've given myself to Jesus. He must be my only love" – Kateri Tekakwitha



The martyr Jan Hus became a Czech national hero

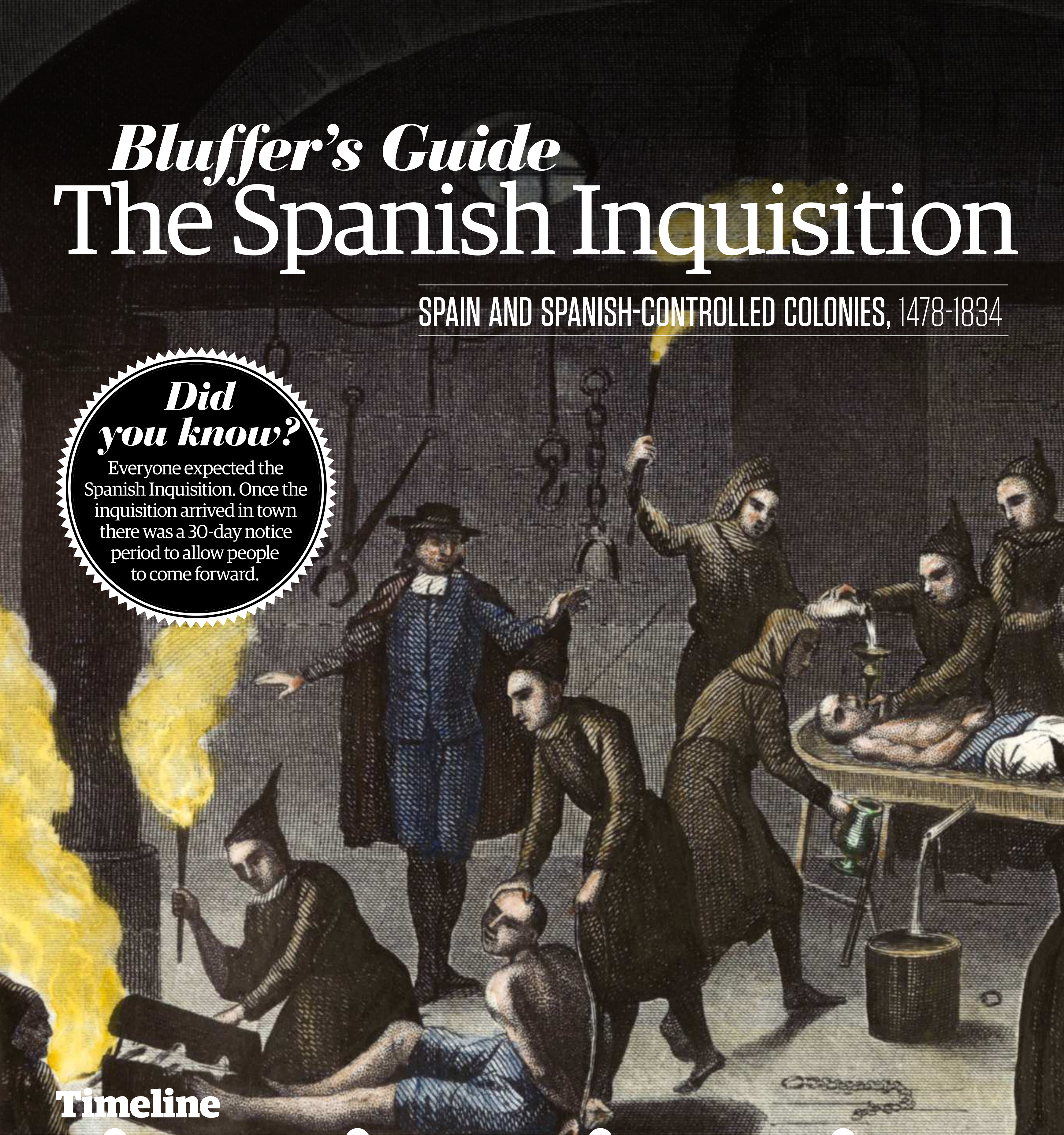
Jan Hus

Nationality: Czech
Born: 1369
Died: 1415

A full century before Martin Luther started the Protestant Reformation, preacher Jan Hus was already campaigning against the moral failings of the Catholic Church. He was heavily influenced by the writing of John Wycliffe, an English reformer who came before him, and translated his work into Czech for his congregation. Although he did not fully agree with all of Wycliffe's teachings, he was firmly against the selling of indulgences by the papacy and appealed to Jesus Christ as the supreme judge. As a prominent representative of the Bohemian Reformation, Hus was called to justify his views at the Council of Constance in 1414, a meeting set up to find a solution to the division within the church. Hus was promised safe conduct, but when he refused to recant his writings, he was condemned to death and burnt at the stake. His followers then rebelled against their Roman Catholic rulers, defeating several crusades that became known as the Hussite Wars.

Bluffer's Guide
The Spanish Inquisition

SPAIN AND SPANISH-CONTROLLED COLONIES, 1478-1834



Did you know?

Everyone expected the Spanish Inquisition. Once the inquisition arrived in town there was a 30-day notice period to allow people to come forward.

Timeline

1184

The Medieval Inquisition, a precursor to the Spanish Inquisition, begins to punish heretics of the Catholic Church.

1478

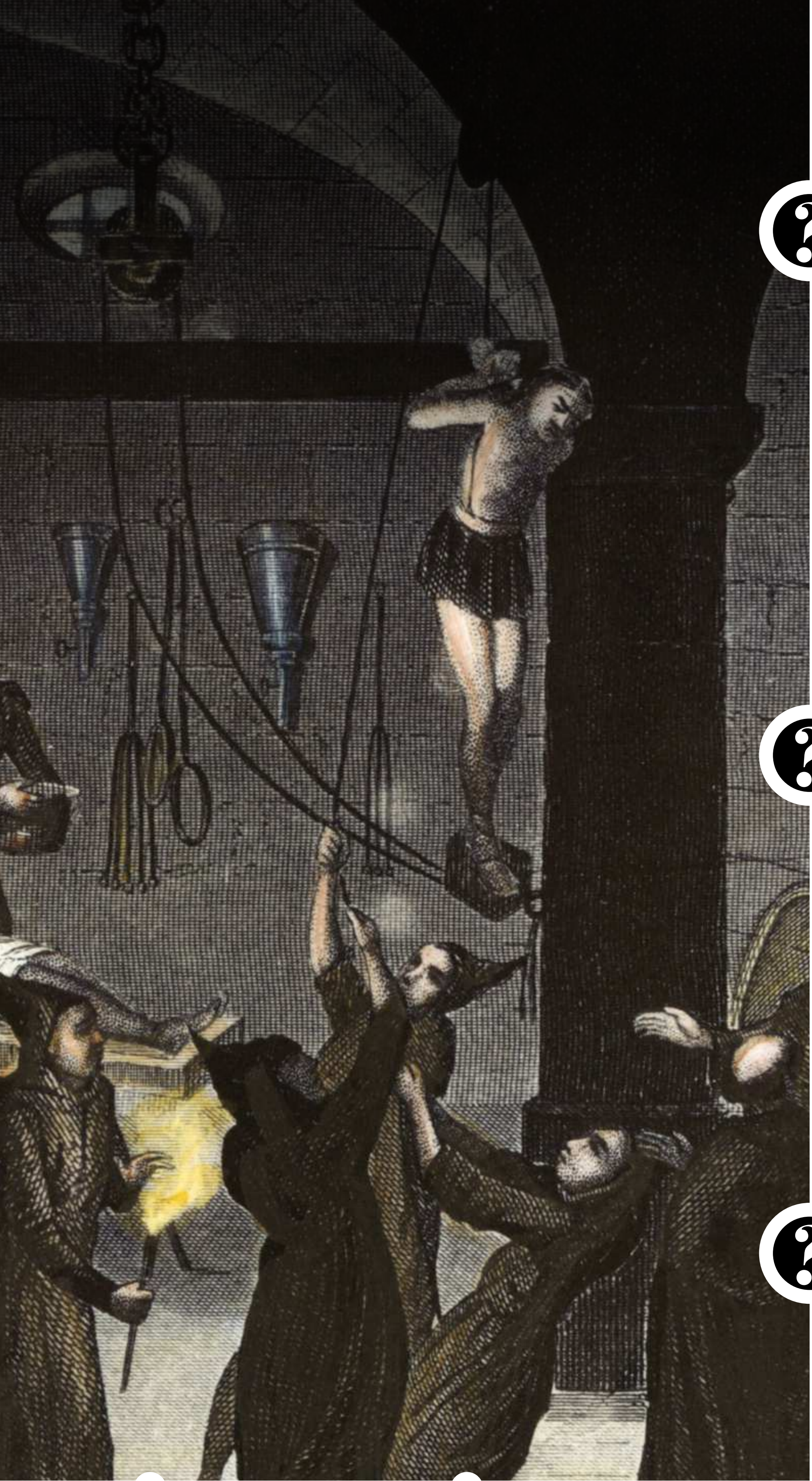
The Spanish Inquisition is officially established when Pope Sixtus IV allows the monarchs to name their own inquisitors.

1481

The first public penance takes place in Seville. Six people are executed by being burned alive in the town centre.

1492

The Alhambra Decree is issued. This formally expels all Jews from Spain. Several thousands of Jews are forced to emigrate.



What was it?

The Spanish inquisition was a tool used by the Catholic monarchs of Spain to suppress heresy among the church. The inquisition was mainly aimed at recently converted Jews, as well as Muslim converts. The accused would be tried at a court, or tribunal, which would travel around the country. Those accused of heresy never knew the identity of their accusers and the only assistance they received was a defence council who would simply encourage them to confess. It was also rare that they would have witnesses to testify on their behalf, as doing so would incriminate the witnesses themselves. The main point of the trial was to obtain a confession, and the inquisition would even use torture to guarantee this. However, it is now believed torture was not used as much as is commonly supposed. Once found guilty, the accused could be sentenced to anything from a fine to a public burning at the stake. Records disagree on the figures, but it is estimated that up to 150,000 people were charged by the inquisition, while between

The Inquisition was known to use torture instruments such as thumbscrews to extract confessions from conversos

Why did it happen?

Medieval Spain had been, for a good stretch of time, a multiracial and multi-religious country. However, towards the end of the 14th century animosity towards the Jewish population began to grow. This pushed many Jews to convert to Christianity to escape persecution; they became known as conversos. Many conversos rose through the ranks of government and nobility, and gained great wealth. This sparked jealousy among Christians who doubted the sincerity of their conversions. In response, Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II pressed for a papal bill to set up the inquisition. Its aim would be to investigate conversos believed to be continuing Jewish worship. The idea was to create religious unity, but had the added bonus of bringing in cash, as the government confiscated the property of those found guilty.

Who was there?

Pope Sixtus IV

1414-1484

Sixtus was the pope who issued the papal bill that allowed the inquisition, a move he would later come to regret.

Tomás de Torquemada

1420-1498

Torquemada was the first Grand Inquisitor of the Spanish Inquisition, despite the fact that he himself had converso ancestors.

Isabella I of Castille

1451-1504

Isabella along with her husband Ferdinand II established the Spanish Inquisition in response to the public anger against Jews.

1609

Philip III of Spain issues the decree to expel the Moriscos – Muslims who recently converted to Christianity – from the country.

1834

The Spanish Inquisition is formally abolished by regent during the reign of Queen Isabella II.

© Alamy

Isabella of Castile's Spanish Inquisition

Synonymous today with brutality and torture, the Spanish Inquisition was actually established under the rule of one of Spain's most renowned and civilised monarchs

Isabella had been born for this moment. If the 23-year-old princess felt anything other than serenity and conviction, it did not show on her face, her expression betraying nothing as she processed into the church of San Miguel, Segovia, Spain. At last the day had come, and she was to take her place as the queen of Castile and Leon, the largest of the Iberian Peninsula's fragmented kingdoms.

The whole city had come forth to witness her triumph. Only hours before, they had buried the old king and now, his successor, bestride a white horse and adorned with jewels and riches to display her power, came to deliver them from the chaos and disorder that had plagued the people for so long.

Surrounded by her new subjects, Isabella proclaimed her intentions towards the beleaguered kingdom with grace and authority. There would be peace and stability, she promised, and, above all, she would uphold the church that was the cornerstone of her world. Religious unity and peace would reign once again in the Iberian Peninsula. God had decreed it through her, and she would not fail in her duty.

Isabella, to be known in her own time and in centuries to come as one of the greatest rulers Spain had ever seen, was born to John II of Castile and Isabella of Portugal on 22 April 1451. Or so the sources imply, for, at the time, she was considered so inconsequential that the date of her birth and baptism were not even recorded.

She was born into a Spain that was not yet united: Castile and the rest of the Iberian Peninsula was a hotbed of political, religious and social unrest, and the princess – who stood third in line to the throne after the birth of her younger brother, Alfonso – did not have a secure childhood. When her father died in 1454, her elder stepbrother became king as Henry IV: living away from court but under the constant eye of her older brother's men, Isabella, her grief-stricken mother and younger brother were kept out of the public eye, ostensibly for their own good but in reality to keep them away from the intrigue that surrounded the court and the thorny issue of the succession.

In greatly reduced living conditions, it was here that Isabella's life-long piety was first carefully cultivated at the hands of her mother and friends, the religious conviction that would see her through many a hardship taking root in fertile soil. It was also during these years of hardship that Isabella's already apparent self control and iron will were carefully honed, standing her in good stead for what was to follow.

Castile under Henry's rule was dangerously unstable: weak, inept and in thrall to his favourites, the king was dethroned in effigy by his nobles in 1465 and Isabella's younger brother declared king. Civil war broke out, and as the kingdom descended further into terror and brutality, Isabella switched allegiance, proclaiming her support for her younger brother. All expectations were that Alfonso would return Castile to its former glory, but hopes were dashed when the young pretender died suddenly in 1468. Amid the official story of plague, rumours of poisoning abounded, and Isabella, named as Alfonso's successor, became the perfect focus for the hopes of the kingdom.

Over the years that followed, she steered a careful course; instead of succumbing to pressure to lead the revolt, she instead remained outwardly agreeable towards her older brother, negotiating expertly to

The Inquisition was not a new idea: the Medieval Inquisition had been used in the 13th century achieve what she wanted. Honing the control and determination that had been instilled in her during her early years, Isabella bided her time, waiting for the moment she would be called to bring her kingdom back to order.

Isabella attracted several suitors over the years, but the one who held her lasting attention was Ferdinand, the second son of John, king of the neighbouring kingdom of Aragon. Similar in age to her, fit, athletic, handsome and witty, the match had first been mooted when Isabella was only six years old. Now, some 12 years later, she negotiated her own marriage under the very nose of her brother, and in flagrant defiance of the king, married Ferdinand in 1469.

With his kingdom in tatters, Henry died in 1474. Finally Isabella got what she had fought for: She took the throne as queen of Castile and Leon on 11 December 1474. Although heralded by many as the saviour of the kingdom, the early years of her reign were far from smooth, rife with rebellions and plots to overthrow her. Although she had not been trained to rule, and was lacking in Latin and other accomplishments deemed necessary for the task, Isabella did not falter; she had been appointed by God, and by God she would rule. Only she could bring religious unity to the divided kingdom. Her entire life she had been waiting for this moment. She would not fail.

There had been Jews in Spain for more than 1,500 years, and in Isabella's time the population stood at about 80,000 Jews to 6 million Christians. The question of the Jewish faith had long been a delicate issue in Europe. Expelled from England in 1290 and France just under a century later, the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon had not followed suit, although there had been forced conversions to Christianity twice in quite recent history. Those who converted became known as 'conversos'.

There were those, however, who did not think that the conversos were entirely sincere. They had taken advantage of their new position, it was argued, and indeed many reached positions of power and wealth within the kingdom, further fuelling rumours and jealousies. These false converts, guilty of judaising - practising their old religion while professing the new - were a threat to the security of the realm and the very souls of those who lived there.

Although clever in their deception, there were ways to tell if a convert was still secretly holding to Jewish ways. Food, for one, played a big part in determining if someone's conversion was sincere or not. Declining to eat pork, rabbit, and birds that had been strangled was an instant give away, as was frying meat in olive oil instead of lard. Cleansing of meat in general, the cutting off of fat and cooking meat in advance so as not to cook on a Saturday was also used as evidence against supposedly converted 'new' Christians. Avoiding baptising their children and denying that Jesus had been the Messiah were among other ways of identifying a secret Jew.

The matter was further complicated as there were varying degrees of non-adherence. Some conversos were deeply against the tenets of the Catholic Church, maintaining as many elements of their old faith as they could get away with. Others adopted a mixed approach, mingling Jewish practice with Christian in a hybrid religion that differed from family to family.

One thing was certain, it would no longer be tolerated. Heresy was not something the new queen could afford to ignore: not only the souls of her people but also her own would be in peril, and must be saved at all costs.

It is often said that a visit to Seville in 1477 first stirred Isabella's interest in adopting an inquisition - or investigation - into the religious state of her kingdom. Receiving first-hand reports of false converts within the city would have alarmed the devout queen greatly; the threat they posed to

Isabella's Ring Collection

An attractive prospect on the marriage market, Isabella was not lacking in potential suitors

1457

Ferdinand of Aragon

Reason: A negotiation between Henry of Castile and John II of Navarre to show their united front.
Outcome: The arrangement was as fickle as the friendship, and was broken off four years later.

1461

Charles of Viana

Reason: The Castilian king turned to Ferdinand's 40-year-old brother to cement an alliance.
Outcome: John II had his son imprisoned, and the betrothal became moot as Charles died that year.

1464

Edward IV of England

Reason: Another alliance attempt; with the added benefit of removing Isabella from Castile.
Outcome: Edward IV had already fallen in love with, and secretly married, Elizabeth Woodville.

1465

Afonso V of Portugal

Reason: Another strategic attempt to remove Isabella from the line of succession.
Outcome: Diplomatic relations broke down, much to the relief of the less than impressed Isabella.

1466

Pedro Giron Pachero

Reason: Master of the Order of Calatrava - he held her brother hostage until the betrothal was agreed.
Outcome: The horrified princess prayed to be delivered; Pedro died on his way to claim her.

1468

Richard of York

Reason: The second most powerful man in England, he was a worthy husband for a princess.
Outcome: An alliance with England was no longer on the cards as relations broke down.

1468

Charles Duke of Berry

Reason: A move towards setting aside the historic bad feeling between Spain and France.
Outcome: The habitual conflict between the two countries soon meant the alliance was set aside.

1469

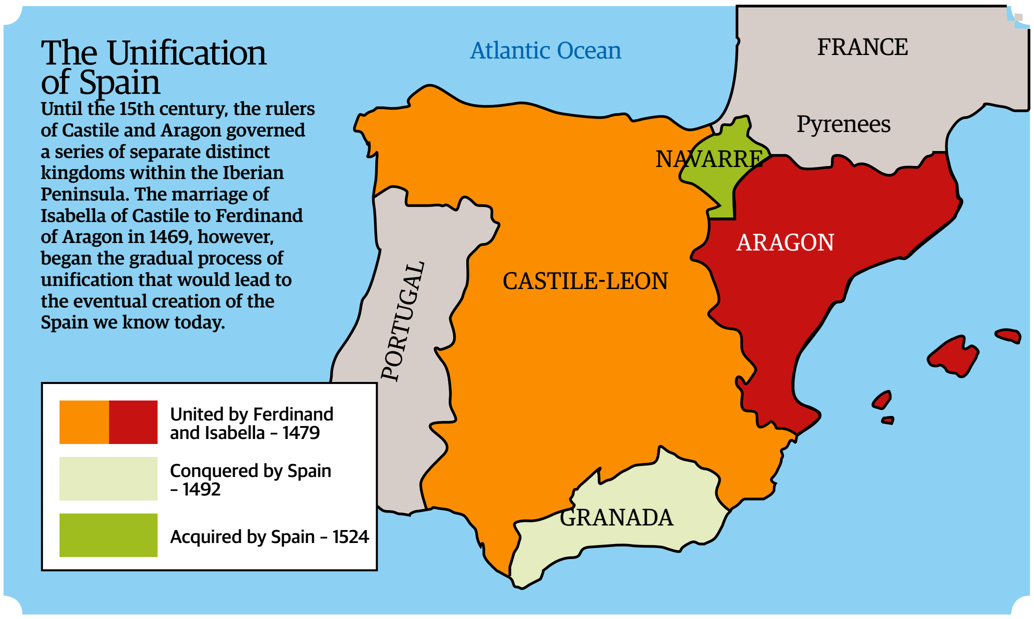
Afonso V of Portugal

Reason: A final attempt to prevent Isabella from inheriting the throne in Castile.
Outcome: The match was thwarted by Isabella's own actions.

1469

Ferdinand of Aragon

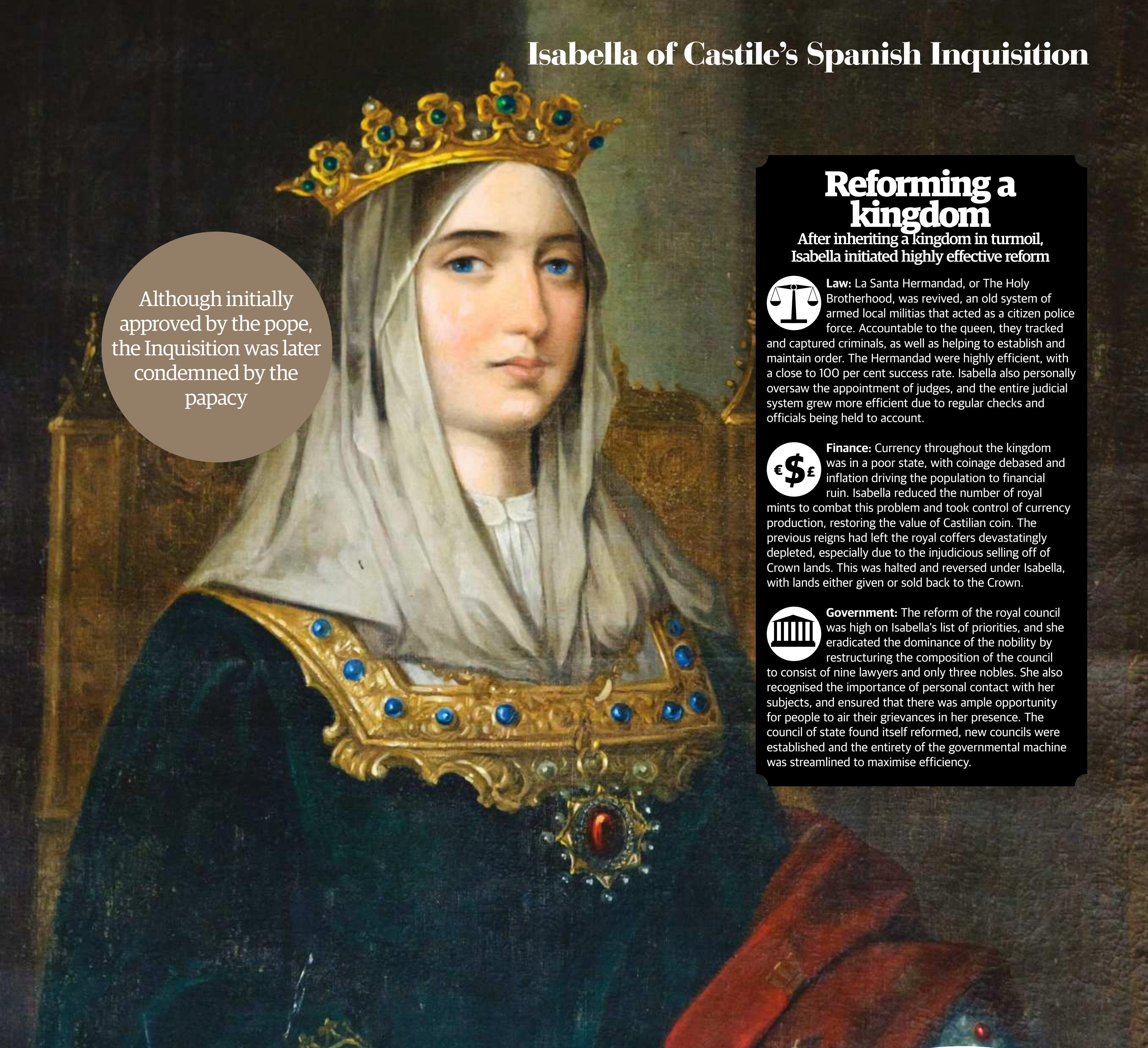
Reason: Isabella never forgot her first betrothal, and entered negotiations on her own behalf.
Outcome: After finally meeting, the smitten Isabella declared she would have no one but Ferdinand.



The Unification of Spain

Until the 15th century, the rulers of Castile and Aragon governed a series of separate distinct kingdoms within the Iberian Peninsula. The marriage of Isabella of Castile to Ferdinand of Aragon in 1469, however, began the gradual process of unification that would lead to the eventual creation of the Spain we know today.

Atlantic Ocean
FRANCE
Pyrenees
NAVARRE
ARAGON
CASTILE-LEON
PORTUGAL
GRANADA
🟧🟥 United by Ferdinand and Isabella – 1479
⬜ Conquered by Spain – 1492
🟩 Acquired by Spain – 1524



Although initially approved by the pope, the Inquisition was later condemned by the papacy

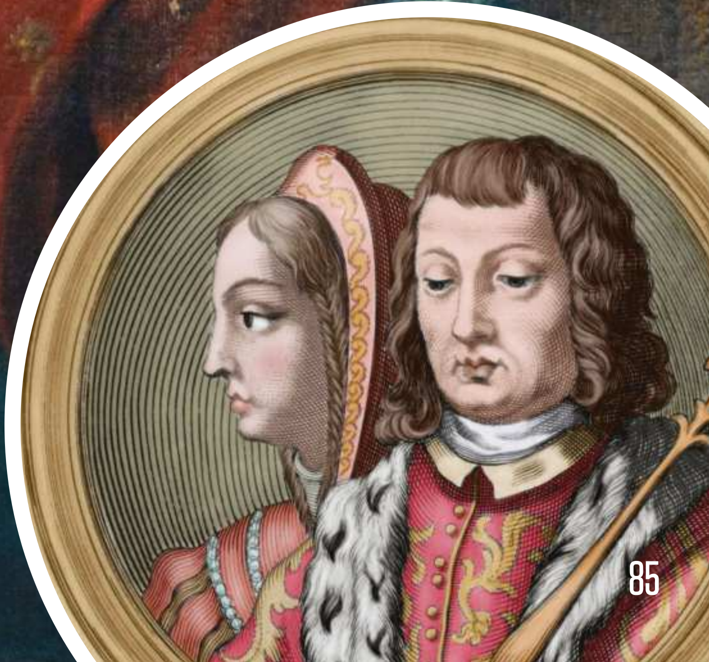
Reforming a kingdom

After inheriting a kingdom in turmoil, Isabella initiated highly effective reform

Law: La Santa Hermandad, or The Holy Brotherhood, was revived, an old system of armed local militias that acted as a citizen police force. Accountable to the queen, they tracked and captured criminals, as well as helping to establish and maintain order. The Hermandad were highly efficient, with a close to 100 per cent success rate. Isabella also personally oversaw the appointment of judges, and the entire judicial system grew more efficient due to regular checks and officials being held to account.

Finance: Currency throughout the kingdom was in a poor state, with coinage debased and inflation driving the population to financial ruin. Isabella reduced the number of royal mints to combat this problem and took control of currency production, restoring the value of Castilian coin. The previous reigns had left the royal coffers devastatingly depleted, especially due to the injudicious selling off of Crown lands. This was halted and reversed under Isabella, with lands either given or sold back to the Crown.

Government: The reform of the royal council was high on Isabella's list of priorities, and she eradicated the dominance of the nobility by restructuring the composition of the council to consist of nine lawyers and only three nobles. She also recognised the importance of personal contact with her subjects, and ensured that there was ample opportunity for people to air their grievances in her presence. The council of state found itself reformed, new councils were established and the entirety of the governmental machine was streamlined to maximise efficiency.



The influence of the reforms made by Isabella and her husband Ferdinand stretched far beyond the borders of their united kingdoms the religious unity and wellbeing of her kingdom would have been a very real concern.

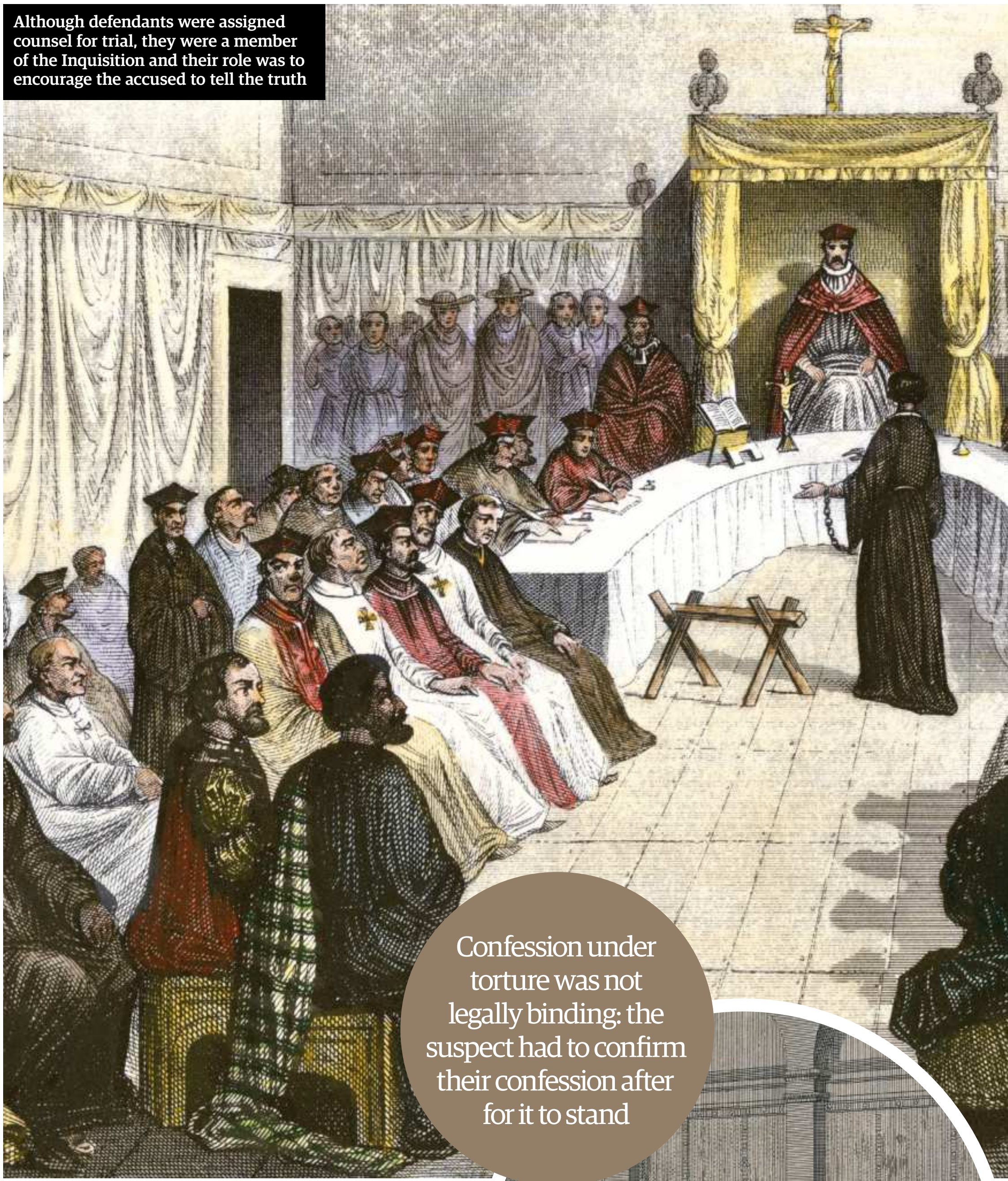
There were those who advocated an aggressive approach from the start, but it seems Isabella was not initially inclined to follow such a course. Despite a Papal Bull granted in 1478 by Pope Sixtus IV giving permission to establish the Inquisition within Castile, Isabella was in no hurry to put it into practice. Ignoring the advocates of a high-handed approach, Isabella instead concentrated attention on religious education, or rather the lack of it; certain that poor training was the reason conversos were failing to follow their new faith, she embarked upon a programme of education to establish the religious conformity essential for the security of her reign.

Two men greatly trusted by Isabella - Cardinal Mendoza and her confessor, the eventual Archbishop of Granada, Hernando de Talavera - were entrusted with this vital task. Arriving in Seville, they set to work, organising priests into enlightening the misguided conversos. They did not make much headway, however, and it soon became clear that they could do little to penetrate the religious ignorance that plagued the town.

For two years attempts were continued, with little success. Despite her own reservations, there were those close to Isabella who continued to advocate the introduction of an inquisition. Even her husband Ferdinand, ever the pragmatist, was all for it; if nothing else, it would prove a good way of inflating the royal coffers through the confiscation of converso property. With a heavy heart and steely resolve, Isabella had to concede that her attempts to bring religious conformity and peace to her realm had failed. By a royal decree of 27 September 1480, the Spanish Inquisition - or The Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition - was unleashed.

Isabella's initial aim was simple: root out the false converts among the converso population and get rid of the heretics jeopardising her beloved kingdom. Although popularised in Spain, it was not an entirely novel idea, and the new inquisition was modelled closely on the older Medieval Inquisition. Under Isabella and Ferdinand, however, the inquisitorial method was given new life, fuelled by Isabella's conviction that religious unity must be achieved whatever the cost.

Despite the reputation the Spanish Inquisition would later gain, initially it was not entirely



Although defendants were assigned counsel for trial, they were a member of the Inquisition and their role was to encourage the accused to tell the truth

Confession under torture was not legally binding: the suspect had to confirm their confession after for it to stand

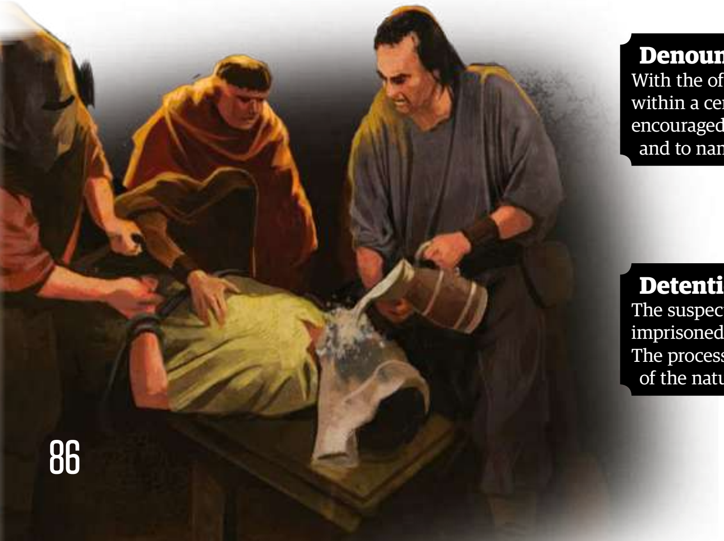
How it worked

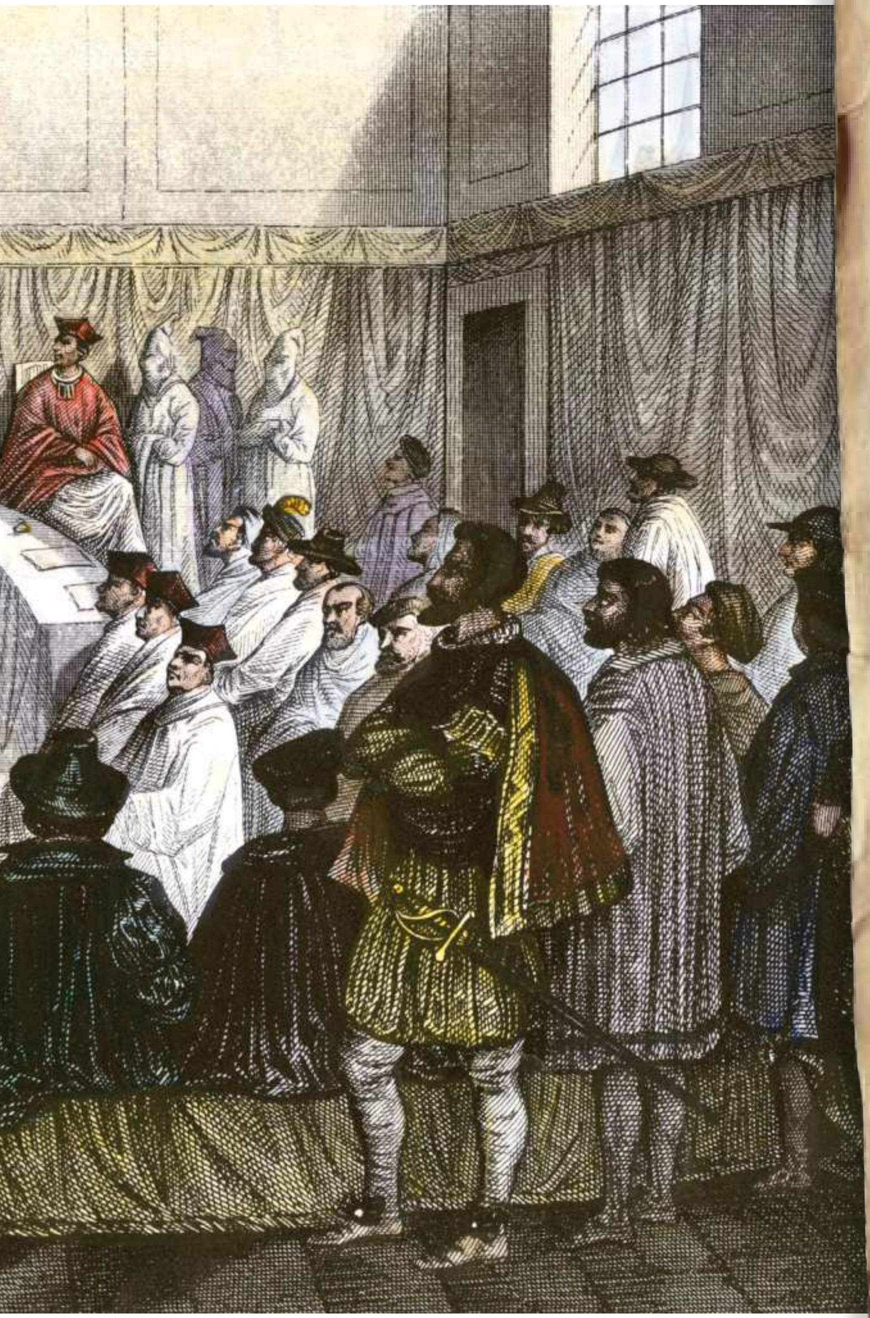
What happened for a suspect to go from being accused to convicted, and what outcome could they hope for?

Denouncement
With the offer of grace if confession was made within a certain amount of time, people were encouraged to come forward to confess their sins and to name others in the process.

Detention
The suspect was relieved of their property and imprisoned, their family left in financial ruin. The process was secret, the accused not informed of the nature of the accusations against them.

Trial
The defendant testified, and those who denounced them did likewise. Finding witnesses to absolve them or to prove that their accusers were untrustworthy were a suspect's only means of defence.





THE SPANISH INQUISITION IS HIRING

Looking for a career change? Want to be part of the most ruthless organisation known to Christian Europe? Look no further for exciting new opportunities

Employment opportunities

Grand Inquisitor

Description: Overseeing the Inquisition and rooting out insincere converts to Catholicism, you will aid and encourage the expansion of the Inquisition throughout Spain and beyond. In this vital role, you will also preside over the Council of the Supreme and General Inquisition.

Skills required: Good leadership, dedication to returning Spain to Christianity, willing to stay in post for several years. Thick skin.

Inquisitor

Description: Answerable to the Grand Inquisitor. Pay: 60,000 maravedies, to rise as the century progresses. A frontline position, you will spend a good deal of time deliberating verdicts and collecting evidence in the quest to eradicate heresy from Spain.

Skills required: No theological training necessary, but must be well versed in the law: university law degree or current position as a tax collector considered a distinct advantage.

Calificador

Description: In this role you will weigh the merits of cases brought before the tribunal. Listening to evidence and deciding if heresy has been committed and arrest warranted will also be within your remit.

Skills required: A theological background is customary for this role, along with good listening and decision-making skills.

Alguacil (Bailiff)

Description: You will be responsible for the arrest and jailing of suspects, along with taking possession of their goods. In this role you will also be expected to implement creative ways of extracting a confession, and be prepared to do whatever it takes.

Skills required: Perseverance and determination are essential to success in this post. A strong stomach and lack of emotion also a bonus.

Fiscal (Prosecutor)

Description: A job right at the heart of the Inquisition: presenting accusations, investigating rumours and getting the truth out of witnesses, there is never a boring moment in this role. Excellent promotion prospects to Inquisitor.

Skills required: Ability to drive the prosecution process. You will also be expected to perform mental and physical torture when required.

Notary of Property

Description: You will be responsible for registering the goods of the accused upon their detention, noting in detail both what they have with them and what other property they have to their name.

Skills required: Good record-keeping skills, the ability to tell if property is of worth, neat handwriting preferable.

Notary of the Secret

Description: Required to record the testimony of accused and witnesses, you will be present during interrogations to make a detailed record of all that occurs. A permanent position, it comes with the rare benefits of access to the Inquisitorial archives and security of tenure.

Skills required: Attention to detail, ability to write fast and clearly, good memory and organisational skills are all essential to succeed in this post.

Familiar

Description: A lay position, the successful candidate will become an honoured servant of the Inquisition. Particularly suited to members of the nobility or those after a title, benefits include being permitted to carry arms in order to protect Inquisitors and, of course, yourself.

Skills required: Must be ready to do your duty at all times. Inclination towards informing not essential but advantageous.

Voluntary confession
This was the safest bet; confessing freely could mean staying alive, and with a reduced punishment than keeping quiet, although by no means guaranteed.

Acquittal
Unusual, but not unheard of, the suspect could be acquitted of the charges made against them, leading to their release.

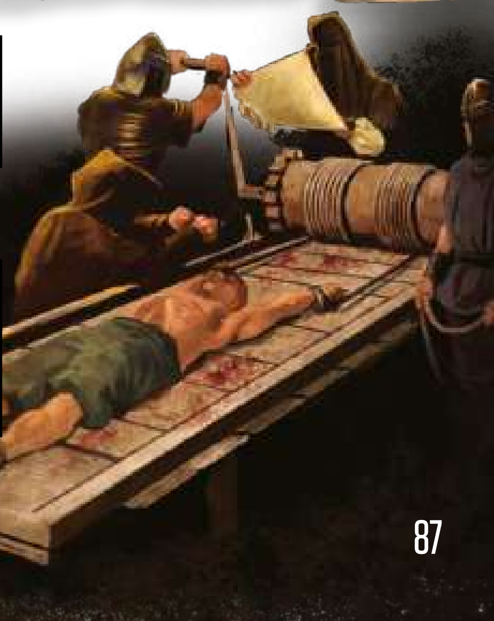
Suspended
In this instance, the trial was suspended, with the suspect either being released or, if they were unlucky, held in prison until such a time that the proceedings could recommence.

Penanced
The suspect, considered guilty of judaising, was required to show their repentance for their sin. This could be anything from a fine to lifetime imprisonment in a convent.

Torture
This was to force a confession and not to cause pain per se, but that was little comfort to the accused, especially as no exception was made for age, sex or infirmity.

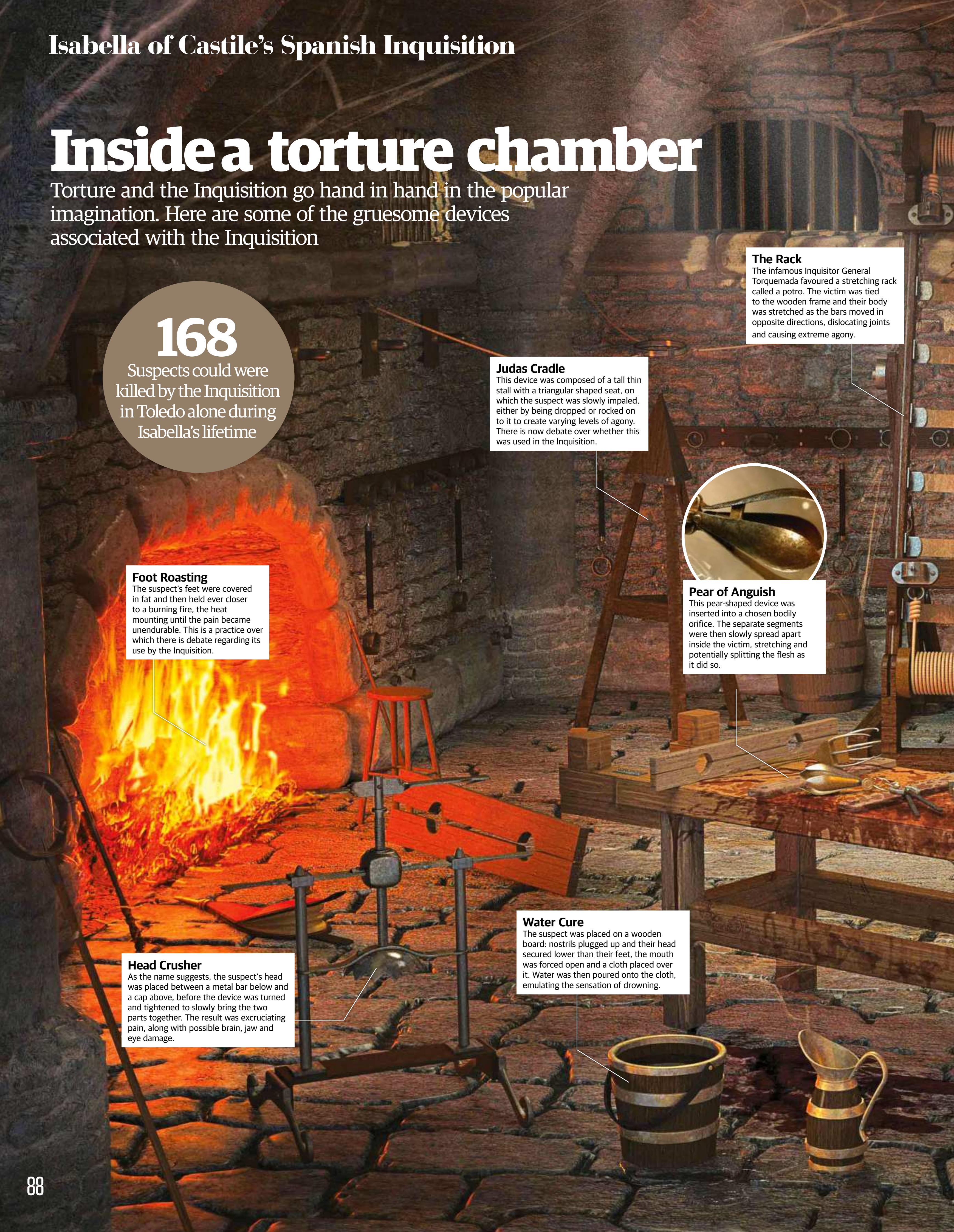
Reconciled
A public ceremony took place where the accused received letters patent to allow them back into the life of the church. Punishment was severe, including confiscation of property and whipping.

Relaxation
The end of the road: used for those who remained impenitent, the suspect was handed over to the secular forces to face the flames. If repentance was shown, the condemned would be strangled before being burned.



Inside a torture chamber

Torture and the Inquisition go hand in hand in the popular imagination. Here are some of the gruesome devices associated with the Inquisition



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Suspects could were killed by the Inquisition in Toledo alone during Isabella's lifetime

The Rack

The infamous Inquisitor General Torquemada favoured a stretching rack called a potro. The victim was tied to the wooden frame and their body was stretched as the bars moved in opposite directions, dislocating joints and causing extreme agony.

Judas Cradle

This device was composed of a tall thin stall with a triangular shaped seat, on which the suspect was slowly impaled, either by being dropped or rocked on to it to create varying levels of agony. There is now debate over whether this was used in the Inquisition.

Foot Roasting

The suspect's feet were covered in fat and then held ever closer to a burning fire, the heat mounting until the pain became unendurable. This is a practice over which there is debate regarding its use by the Inquisition.

Pear of Anguish

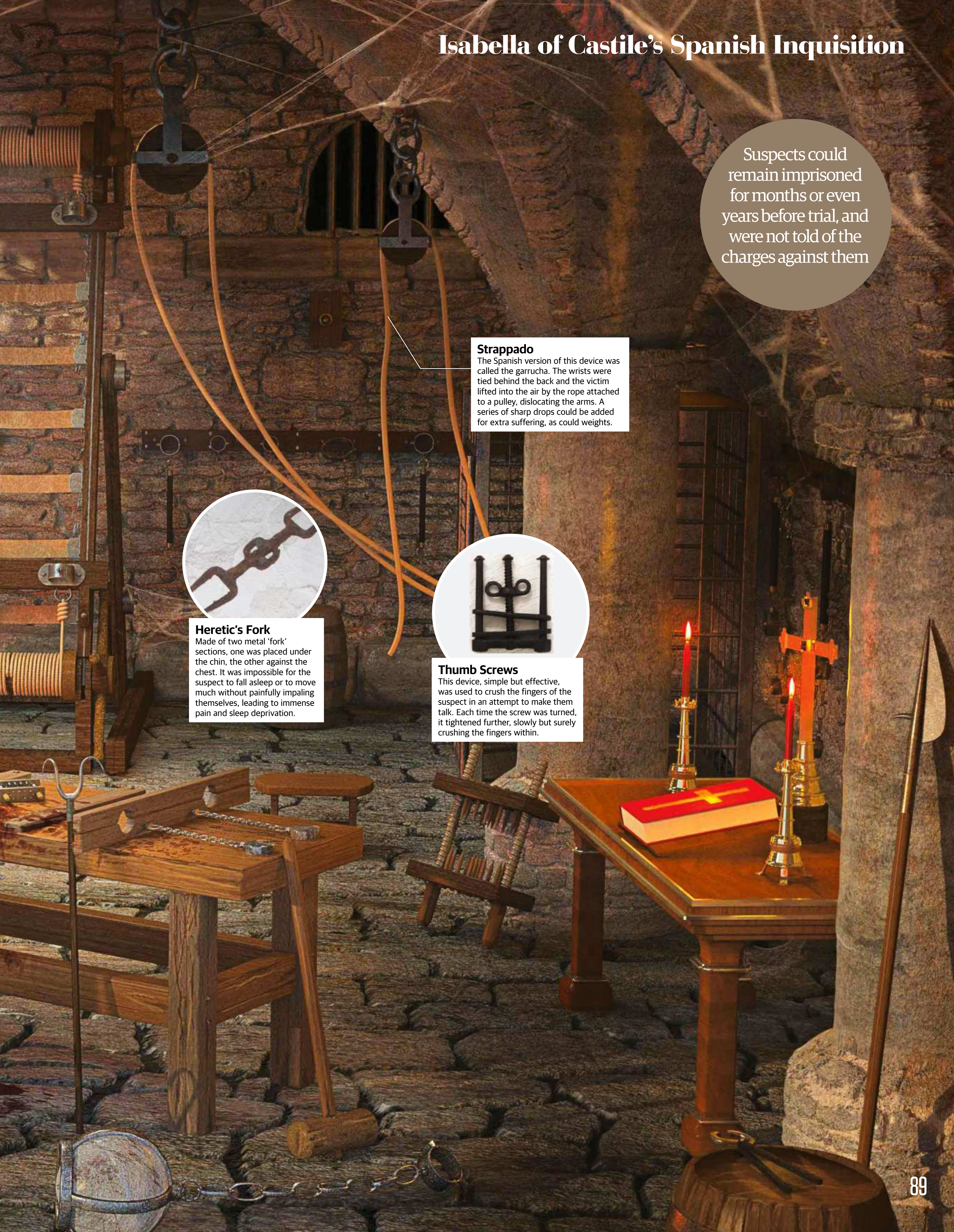
This pear-shaped device was inserted into a chosen bodily orifice. The separate segments were then slowly spread apart inside the victim, stretching and potentially splitting the flesh as it did so.

Water Cure

The suspect was placed on a wooden board: nostrils plugged up and their head secured lower than their feet, the mouth was forced open and a cloth placed over it. Water was then poured onto the cloth, emulating the sensation of drowning.

Head Crusher

As the name suggests, the suspect's head was placed between a metal bar below and a cap above, before the device was turned and tightened to slowly bring the two parts together. The result was excruciating pain, along with possible brain, jaw and eye damage.



Suspects could remain imprisoned for months or even years before trial, and were not told of the charges against them

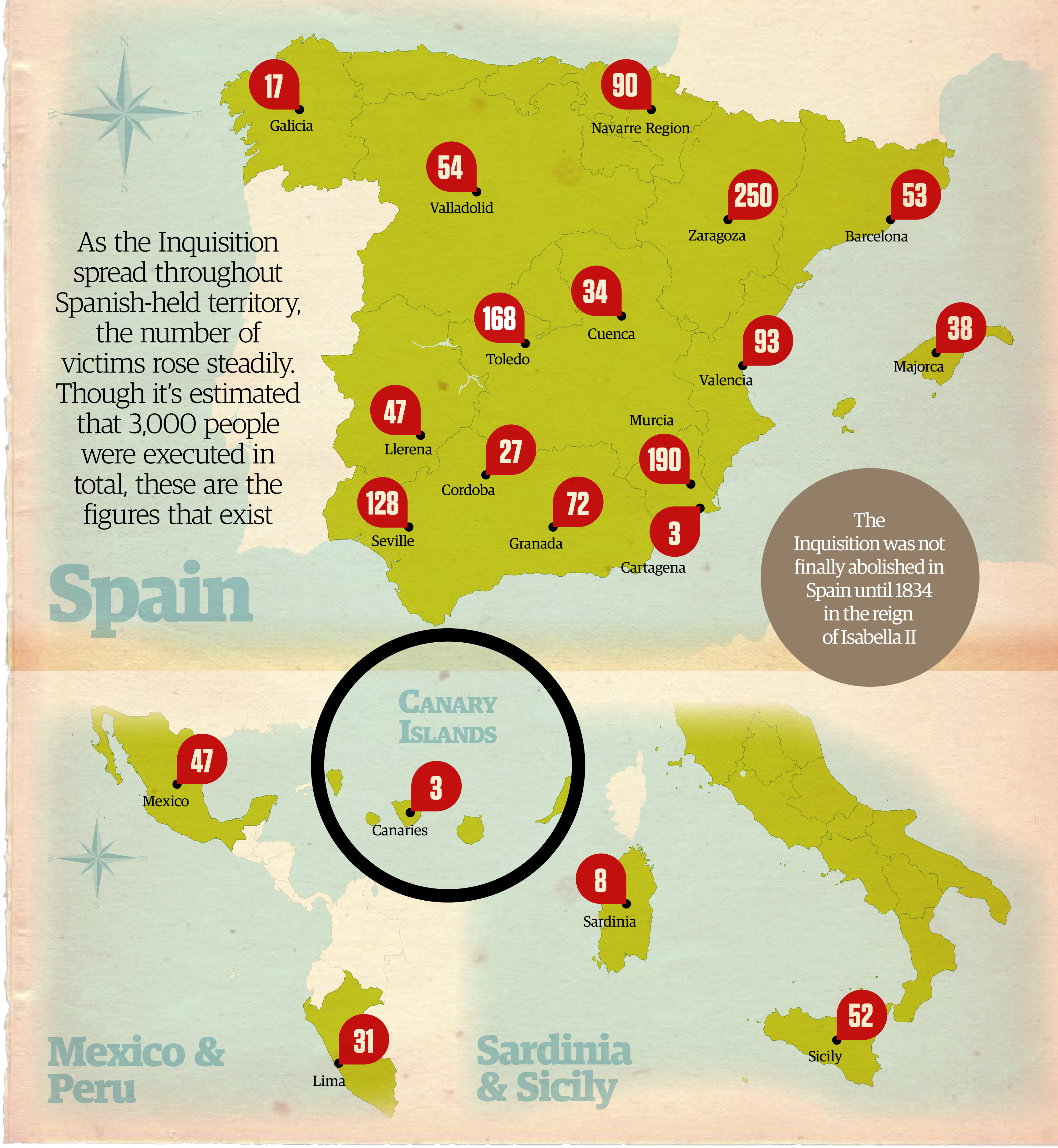
Strappado
The Spanish version of this device was called the garrucha. The wrists were tied behind the back and the victim lifted into the air by the rope attached to a pulley, dislocating the arms. A series of sharp drops could be added for extra suffering, as could weights.

Heretic's Fork
Made of two metal 'fork' sections, one was placed under the chin, the other against the chest. It was impossible for the suspect to fall asleep or to move much without painfully impaling themselves, leading to immense pain and sleep deprivation.

Thumb Screws
This device, simple but effective, was used to crush the fingers of the suspect in an attempt to make them talk. Each time the screw was turned, it tightened further, slowly but surely crushing the fingers within.

Spanish Inquisition Executions 1540-1700

As the Inquisition spread throughout Spanish-held territory, the number of victims rose steadily. Though it's estimated that 3,000 people were executed in total, these are the figures that exist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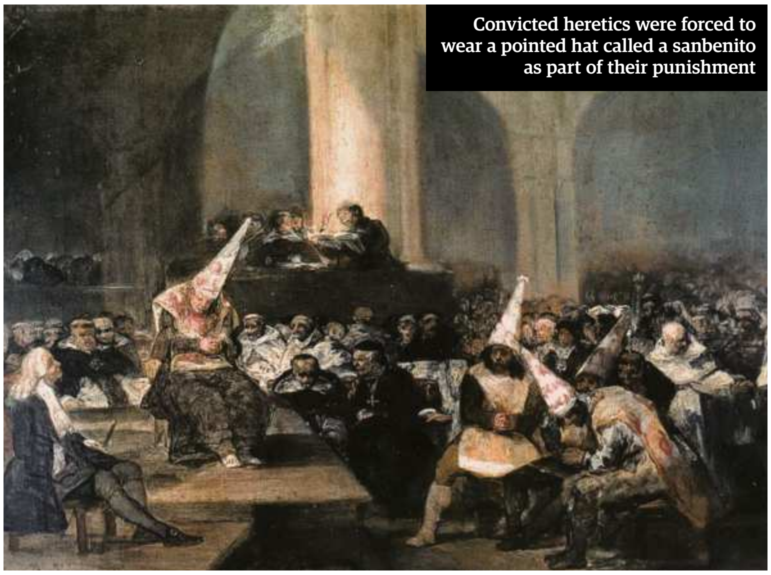
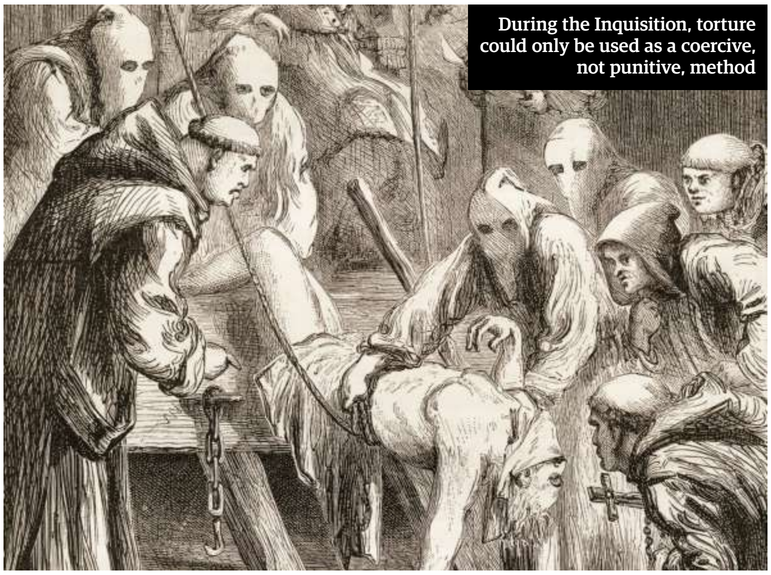
17
Galicia
90
Navarre Region
54
Valladolid
250
Zaragoza
53
Barcelona
34
Cuenca
168
Toledo
93
Valencia
38
Majorca
47
Llerena
27
Cordoba
Murcia
190
128
Seville
72
Granada
3
Cartagena
Spain
Canary Islands
3
Canaries
47
Mexico
8
Sardinia
31
Lima
52
Sicily
Mexico & Peru
Sardinia & Sicily

The Inquisition was not finally abolished in Spain until 1834 in the reign of Isabella II



Convicted heretics were forced to wear a pointed hat called a sanbenito as part of their punishment



During the Inquisition, torture could only be used as a coercive, not punitive, method

unpopular. On the contrary, at a time when the kingdom had been almost torn apart by the instability of civil war, to some it was a relief to see the proof of firm control being established by the new reign of Isabella. This relief, however, proved premature: the people of the kingdom of Castile would live to regret the day the Inquisition was established within their cities.

The Inquisitors, with their distinctive white robes and black hoods, struck first at that well-known hotbed of converso laxity: Seville. At their arrival, mass panic ensued among the converso community, with about 4,000 people fleeing the city. They were right to be afraid. Retribution was swift. Moves were taken to track down those who had fled, while the nobility, under threat of excommunication, informed against those whose whereabouts were known to them.

The first public execution took place in Seville on 6 February 1481. During the spectacle of the auto de fe, six people were burned, a terrifying declaration of the might of the Inquisition and the intention of the monarchy behind it.

With that, the Inquisition spread steadily through Spain, with tribunals set up in Cordoba, Jaen and the religious capital of Toledo by 1485. A set pattern to proceedings was quickly established: firstly, the people of a town were prepared – the fear of God – and by extension the Inquisition – preached from the pulpit for all to hear. Matters officially began with the arrival of the Inquisitors, when the Edict of Grace – a call to come forward and confess – would be read out, and a span of time given to the people of the town to respond. If they confessed their sins and admitted their Judaism, they could hope for redemption. If not, they should expect the full wrath of the Inquisition to fall upon them.

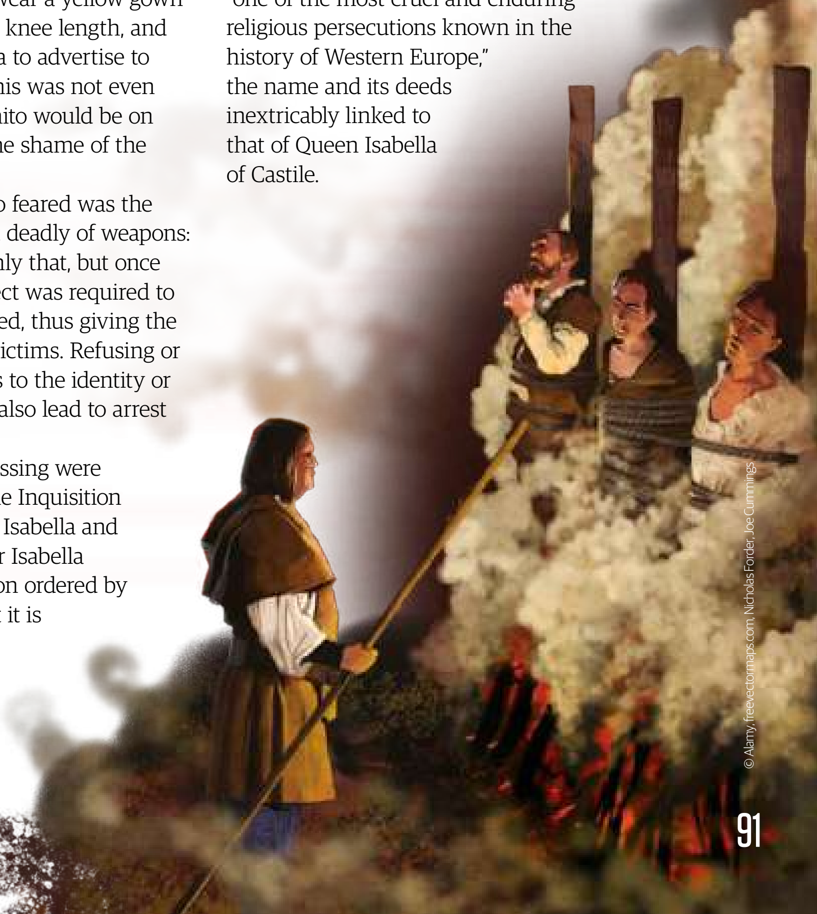
Once a suspect was in custody, the primary aim was to extract a confession. If a person spoke freely, then all to the good. If not, there were ways of gaining the information required. Torture and the Spanish Inquisition have become virtually synonymous in the popular imagination, and for good reason: a standard 15th-century approach, it was used by the Inquisition in order to gain the all-important admission of guilt. Although technically a suspect could only undergo torture once, there were ways around this restriction – talk of a session being paused or suspended meant that it could be continued the following day without strictly breaking the rules.

Once confession had been obtained, the details of the case were then examined, and verdict and sentence, if necessary, decided. Acquittal, though rare, could sometimes occur. A suspect could likewise be sentenced to perform penance, or the harsher verdict of reconciliation, which could mean indefinite imprisonment, religious incarceration, flogging, or serving on a galley boat. Those who were reconciled were made to wear a yellow gown called a sanbenito, woollen and knee length, and a tall, conical hat called a coroza to advertise to people that they had sinned. This was not even forgotten on death – the sanbenito would be on display in the local church to the shame of the family left behind.

What made the Inquisition so feared was the fact that it thrived on that most deadly of weapons: anonymous accusations. Not only that, but once a confession was made, a suspect was required to name others who had also lapsed, thus giving the Inquisition a steady stream of victims. Refusing or failing to alert the authorities as to the identity or whereabouts of a heretic could also lead to arrest and execution.

Although permission and blessing were initially granted by the pope, the Inquisition was financed and organised by Isabella and Ferdinand themselves. Whether Isabella personally attended an execution ordered by the Inquisition is unknown, but it is undeniable that she knew, and approved of, the methods used by the Inquisitorial machine. Despite this, many of her closest and most trusted advisers had converted from the Jewish faith, with three secretaries that served the monarchs being from converso families. It was even said that Ferdinand himself had Jewish blood in his veins from converso ancestors.

Despite Isabella's hopes, it became apparent that merely targeting conversos was not enough, and in 1492, all Jews were expelled from Spain. In the decades that followed, the Inquisition spread throughout Spanish-held territory, including Naples, the Spanish Netherlands, and territory held by Spain in the Americas. There is no established figure of how many people in total were affected, though it is estimated that 3,000 people went to the flames during Isabella's reign. The Inquisition, to this day, remains "one of the most cruel and enduring religious persecutions known in the history of Western Europe," the name and its deeds inextricably linked to that of Queen Isabella of Castile.



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Conquest in the New World

Religious conversion and military conquest went hand-in-hand; colonisation in the New World really was done with fire and sword

The European colonisation of the Americas had a strongly religious aspect to it. It also provided opportunities for further military and political conquest between competing powers. The British efforts were founded more on trade than religion, while spreading the Catholic faith was integral to those of the Spanish, French and Portuguese.

Colonising the New World was as much a battle of ideas as military might and political will. Granted, the new colonies provided much wealth and raw materials, but religious fervour also guided the swords and muskets of the colonists. First came settlers and armies, then the Church and then, enforcing the new creed, the dreaded Inquisition.

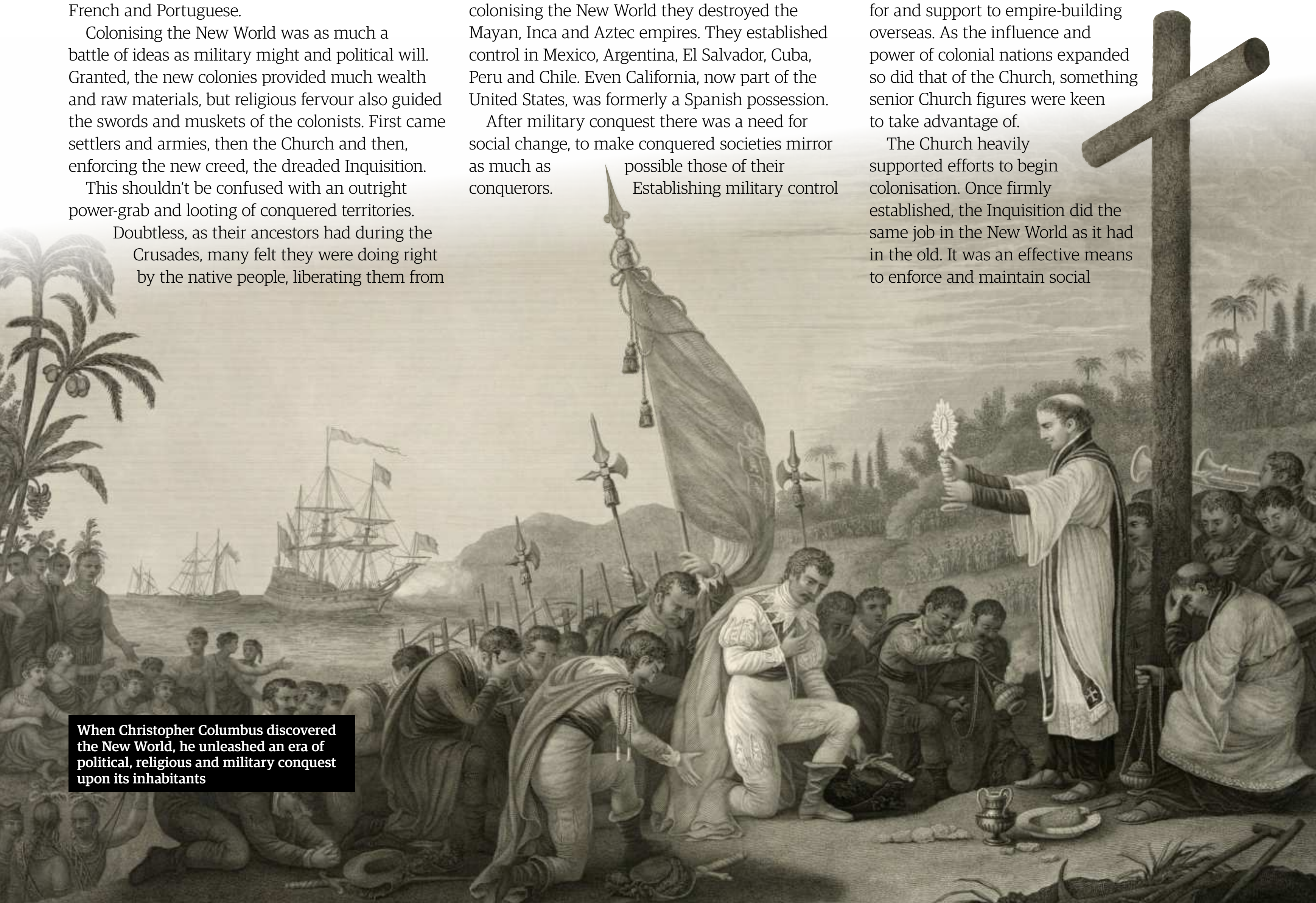
This shouldn't be confused with an outright power-grab and looting of conquered territories. Doubtless, as their ancestors had during the Crusades, many felt they were doing right by the native people, liberating them from what they saw as heathen ideas and rituals. Many colonists believed they were snatching damned souls from the jaws of Hell and their methods were justified. Not surprisingly, many of the indigenous cultures in question felt otherwise.

The most successful European colonisation of the Americas was that of the Spanish. While colonising the New World they destroyed the Mayan, Inca and Aztec empires. They established control in Mexico, Argentina, El Salvador, Cuba, Peru and Chile. Even California, now part of the United States, was formerly a Spanish possession.

After military conquest there was a need for social change, to make conquered societies mirror as much as possible those of their conquerors. Establishing military control was relatively easy, but social control was far more difficult. Replacing local religions and ideas was every bit as important as freely using fire and sword. In short, the New World was really more a continuation of the old.

The Church was at the heart of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism, providing justification for and support to empire-building overseas. As the influence and power of colonial nations expanded so did that of the Church, something senior Church figures were keen to take advantage of.

The Church heavily supported efforts to begin colonisation. Once firmly established, the Inquisition did the same job in the New World as it had in the old. It was an effective means to enforce and maintain social



When Christopher Columbus discovered the New World, he unleashed an era of political, religious and military conquest upon its inhabitants control, persecuting those it deemed a threat and demonstrating the power of both the Church and the colonial ruler.

France also colonised the Americas. While the British and Dutch empires took parts of the present-day Guianas (nowadays Guyana and Suriname), French Guiana remains part of France, at the time a largely Catholic nation. French settlers established such influence that it still resembles its colonial master, much indigenous culture and tradition having been subsumed by those of the French. The US State of Louisiana was also a French colony until bought by the United States in the Louisiana Purchase of 1802. Portugal too had a foothold in the Americas, most notably in Brazil.

Although many fought for religious reasons, some Crusaders fought simply to steal, kill, prove their bravery or secure land overseas

The process was well-defined. Various religious orders established missions in the conquered countries. The Inquisition rooted out and suppressed any ideas, groups or individuals hostile to the spread of Catholicism. Colonial administrations, often heavily influenced by Church figures and policies, reshaped their colonies in their own image, often using force.

While political and military power enforced colonial rule, the Church would spread the Word of God. Churches, cathedrals and missions ensured that Catholicism filled the spiritual vacuum left by the suppression of indigenous faiths and practices. Indigenous people were often regarded with a mixture of contempt and paternalism; they were viewed as ignorant, unenlightened savages needing redemption whether they wanted it or not.

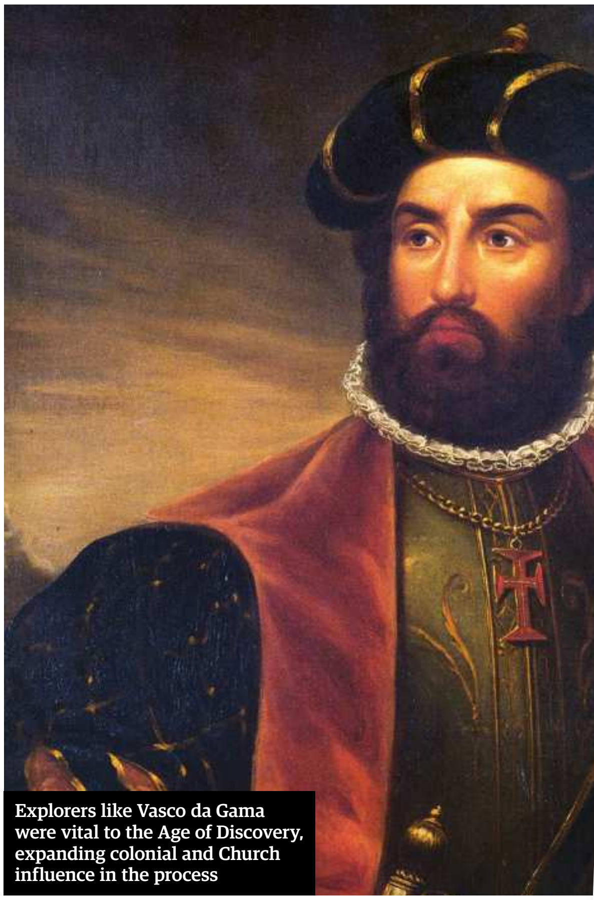
It wasn't all doom and gloom, though. As time passed, attitudes toward repression began changing. Some of the principle reformers were religious figures. Franciscan friar, Antonio de Montesinos, was the first to speak out against repression by the colonial Church and State.

Theologians Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolemeo de las Casas were among the first to draw up theological and philosophical ideas on protecting the human rights of indigenous peoples. Their ideas gathered strength and mark the earliest beginnings of what we now call international law.

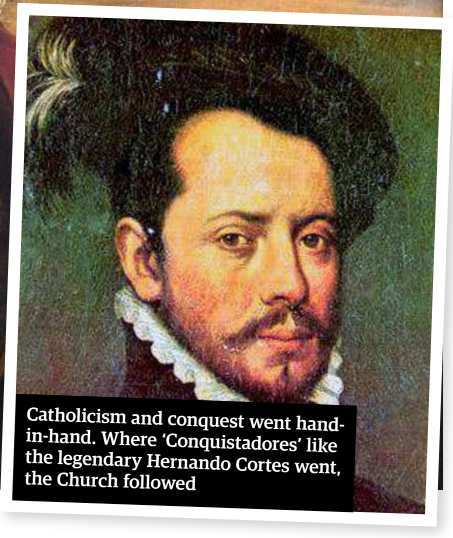
Slavery also saw changing attitudes, including within the Church. Where once the Church had allowed for enslavement of native populations and condoned the slave trade itself, it gradually reformed its approach. The Church's journey toward emancipation included some of Europe's earliest debate and legal reforms on human rights as well.

Ultimately, colonisation's impact was never just about conquest and profit. Its influence has been vast and the Americas were changed irrevocably as a result. Empires rose and fell, traditions and cultures were subsumed or wiped out and maps were redrawn. The Age of Discovery is a vital part not just of religious history, but of history itself.

"The Inquisition suppressed ideas, groups or individuals hostile to Catholicism"



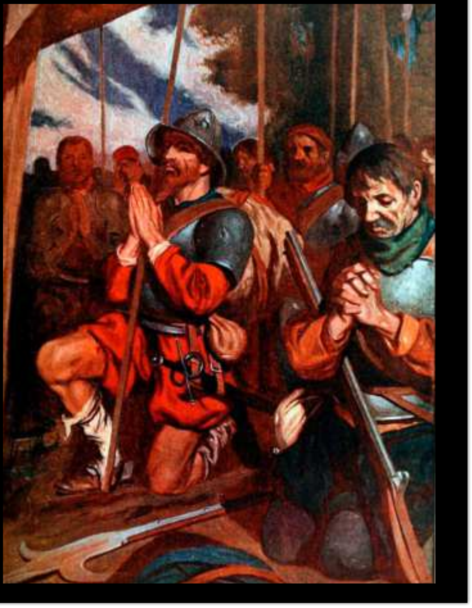
Explorers like Vasco da Gama were vital to the Age of Discovery, expanding colonial and Church influence in the process



Catholicism and conquest went hand-in-hand. Where 'Conquistadores' like the legendary Hernando Cortes went, the Church followed

The sword of the Lord

The Church, State and military were all vital to the Age of Discovery and spreading Catholicism through the New World. Like the Inquisitors, troops often truly believed they were doing the Lord's work. They vastly out-gunned their opposition and brought with them superior firepower, training, weapons and tactics. European troops fought according to the rules of the time, which meant that sacking towns and cities was a regular occurrence. The use of mercenaries and co-opting local tribes as allies were also important factors in the establishment of European colonies overseas. Setting one tribe against another proved highly effective. Mainly religious men, troops were often blessed by priests before battle and absolved of any sins they might commit on the battlefield. These sins were many and varied from killing prisoners to looting towns and keeping captured opponents as slaves. While outnumbered, European troops found their native enemies couldn't match their technology, tactics and firepower. Another factor was disease. Europeans brought with them many illnesses the local populations had never encountered and lacked any immunity to. As Europeans spread, so did their native illnesses. Thousands died as a result. The sword of the Lord was certainly tainted with the blood of innocents.



Burn the witch

Pope Innocent VIII feared rival religions and the supposed rise of Devil-worship so much, he would go to any lengths to stamp them out

In town squares across Europe townsfolk gathered regularly to see judgements made and sinners burn. The witch hunters and Inquisitors gave them what they wanted, inflicting excruciating suffering in the name of the Church. Heretics and witches suffered arrest, torture and death at their hands, while their peers watched them suffer and die. It was a time of paranoia and persecution. It was the age of the witch hunters.

The idea of witches, wizards and warlocks is almost as old as humanity itself. For centuries they've been targets of suspicion and fear. Even today's Wiccans aren't always viewed kindly and neither are avowed Satanists. That said, their modern-day detractors are highly unlikely to inflict the persecution and brutality of their medieval predecessors. In medieval Europe, ordinary people both trusted the Church and feared the Devil infinitely more than they do today.

> Heinrich Kramer was an arch-misogynist. His loathing of women was a factor in their being targeted

In the 15th century the European witch hunts began. The Inquisition had been active for some time investigating, arresting, torturing and burning its way across Europe. Its mission; to root out and destroy heresy. In practice it rooted out and destroyed anyone who disagreed with, questioned or even wanted to debate religious doctrine.

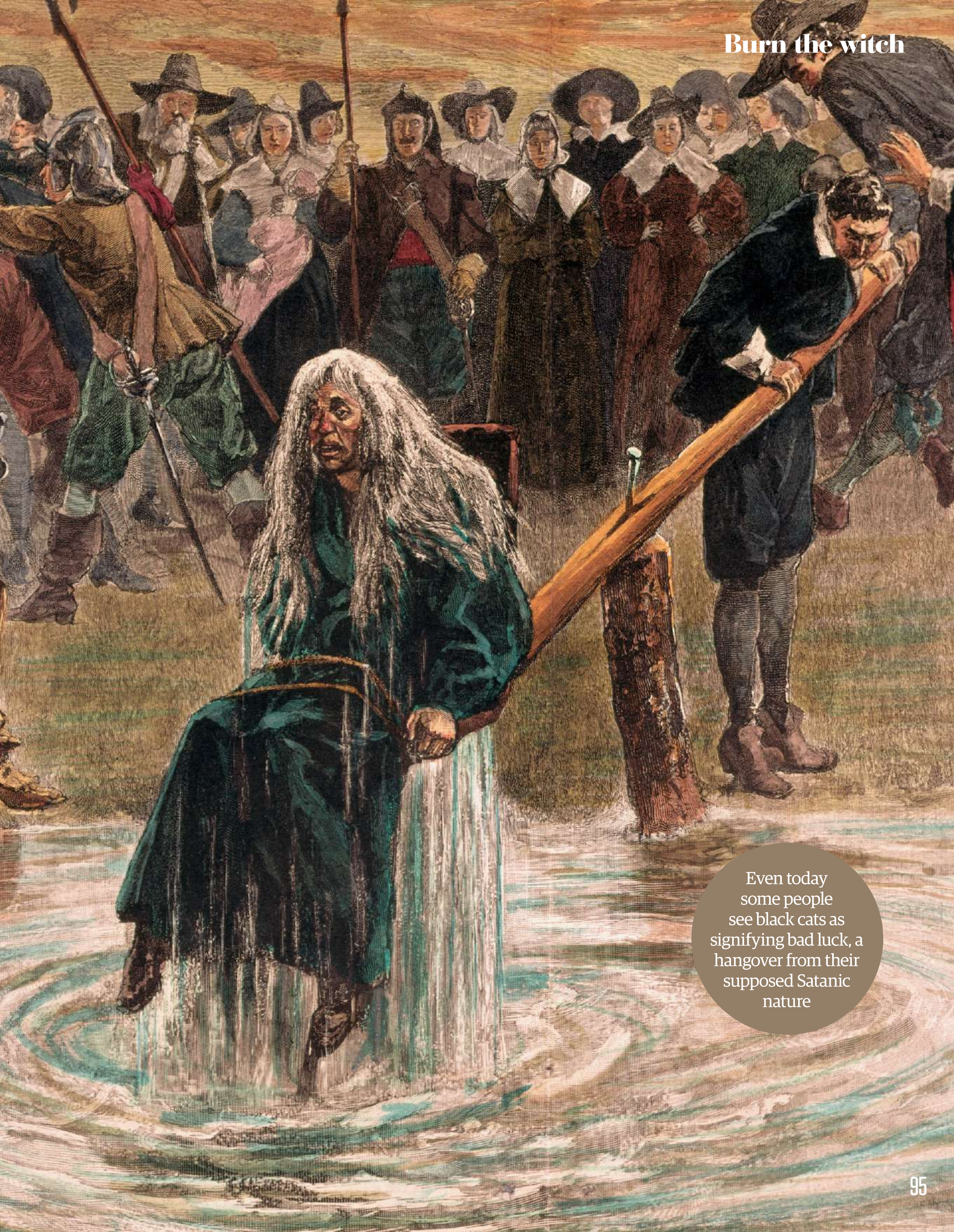
It was a purge unrivalled in European history. Pope Innocent VIII was elected in 1484. A compromise candidate, not unanimously admired by his electors, he saw heresy, witchcraft and Devil worship spreading across Europe and was determined to defeat it. In turn, this led to the rise of the witch hunters. Alsace clergyman Heinrich Kramer's book, *Malleus Maleficarum*, was growing in popularity, providing a timely step-by-step guide.

On 5 December 1484 the Pope issued *Summa desiderantes affectibus*, a papal bull responding to Kramer's personal request to prosecute witches and heretics in his native Germany. While not endorsing Kramer, it encouraged hunting and prosecuting enemies of the Church and servants of the Devil: "We decree and enjoin that the aforesaid Inquisitors be empowered to proceed to the just correction, imprisonment, and punishment of any persons, without let or hindrance, in every way."

Effectively, Innocent VIII gave Inquisitors and witch hunters carte blanche to purge opponents in any way they wanted. Anyone defying or questioning the Church risked arrest, interrogation, a show trial and a swift descent into Hell via the fires of witch hunters and Inquisitors. The Inquisition, especially in Spain, has become a by-word for cruelty and death in the name of spiritual redemption. It lasted 240 years.

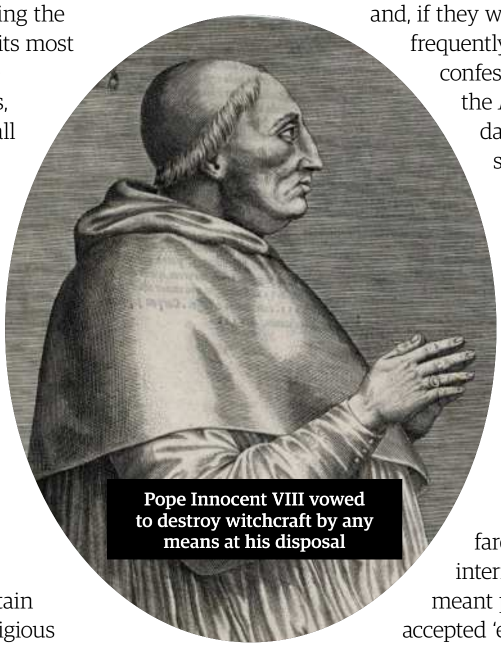
When Kramer published *Malleus Maleficarum*, it included a copy of the edict. Innocent VIII hadn't

© GettyImages



Even today some people see black cats as signifying bad luck, a hangover from their supposed Satanic nature endorsed Kramer or his book, but the inclusion made it look like he had. That the Church officially condemned Kramer's book three years later made little difference, by then the witch hunts were underway. It marked a sustained, bloody campaign to destroy anything the Church saw as a threat. To its most enthusiastic supporters like Heinrich Kramer, dissidents, heretics and witches were all the same.

The bull explicitly acknowledged that witches existed and their activities were the Devil's work. It also urged local authorities to actively support Inquisitors and witch hunters, threatening anyone who didn't with excommunication. Excommunication – being barred from taking part in religious rituals – meant for most worshippers their certain descent into Hell. When religious observance was virtually universal and the vast majority genuinely feared for their souls, it proved a powerful persuader.


Pope Innocent VIII vowed to destroy witchcraft by any means at his disposal

This wasn't the start of the Inquisition. That had existed for some time, intended primarily to root out heretics rather than witches. Now anyone disagreeing with or questioning Church doctrine was fair game. Everyone not completely backing the Church's policies was under suspicion and under threat. And besides the Inquisitors, there was a new enemy just as fearsome: the witch hunters.

The Church's 'official' enemies were heretics and witches. In practice Jews, Protestants, midwives, Gypsies, women, scientists, rival religious sects and many others were caught in the crossfire. Writers, artists, playwrights, poets and anyone else holding dissenting views were also targets. In line with the *Malleus Maleficarum* the principle target of the witch hunts were women, the text itself constantly referring to suspects as 'she.'

While a charge of heresy could be made by and against anyone, by far the majority of witch-hunt victims were women. Men could be accused of being wizards or warlocks and often were. But far fewer men faced the witch hunts than women. Animals weren't exempt, either, particularly cats.

Many suspected witches kept cats and, while a witch's animal companion (known as a 'familiar') could be any animal, keeping a cat was taken by some as a sign of Satanic influence. Many thousands of cats were killed, often very cruelly, in medieval Europe. In Belgium today the town of Ypres still holds its 'Kattenstoet' event every three years commemorating throwing thousands of cats from the Clock Hall belfry, followed by a mock witch-burning. No cats are actually harmed. Instead, they're celebrated.

Estimates of the death toll vary from around 600,000 to possibly 9,000,000. A mere accusation was often enough to see victims dragged from their homes, usually in the dead of night. They were questioned about their alleged crimes and, if they wouldn't confess, were frequently tortured until they confessed or died. According to the *Maleficarum*, if threatening damnation or promising salvation failed; "Let her be often and frequently exposed to torture, beginning with the more gentle of them."

Given that torture involved the strappado, red-hot irons, a medieval version of waterboarding and the dreaded rack, the term 'more gentle' was obviously fairly relative.

Those confessing seldom fared better. Surviving interrogation and trial usually meant public burning. The accepted 'evidence' for witchcraft was, by modern standards, absurd. At the time, to a population implicitly conditioned to follow Church doctrine, it was enough.

The 'swimming trial,' used because witches were believed to have spurned the holy sacrament of baptism, could only result in a guilty verdict. The victim was simply taken to a pond or river and thrown in with a rope tied round their waist. If they sank they were pulled out and revived (assuming they hadn't already drowned). If they floated this was proof of witchcraft and they would be burned.

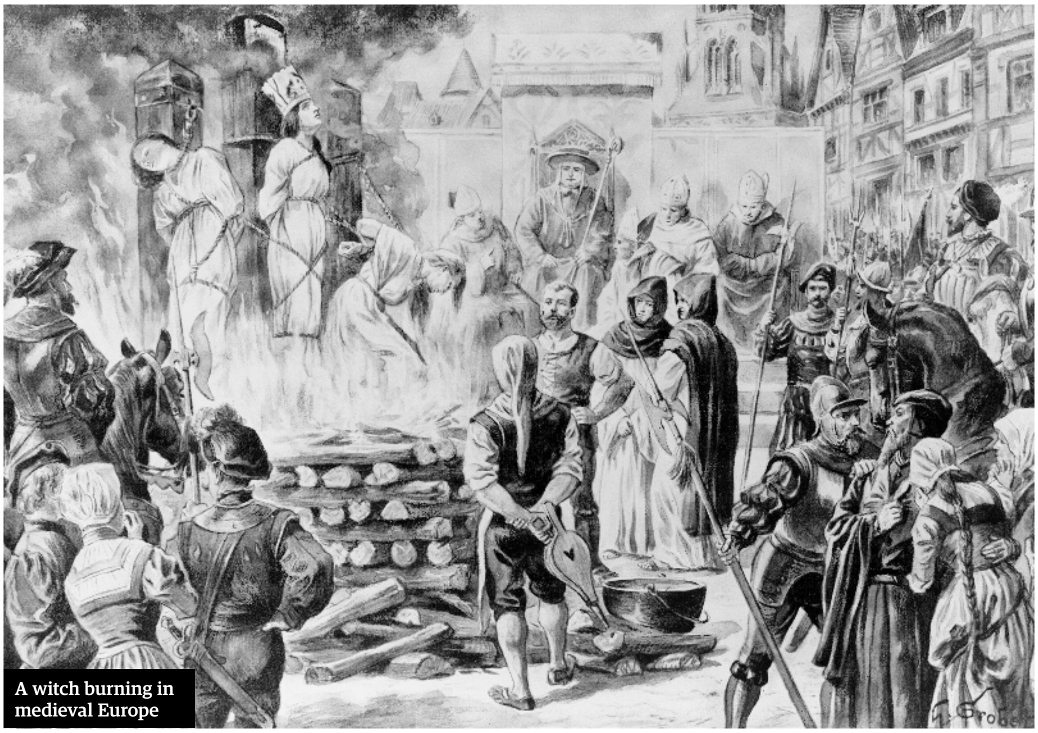
The 'prayer test' was equally likely to result in burning. At a time when many people were semi-literate at best, suspected witches were made to recite prayer verses. Witches were believed incapable of reciting scriptures without hesitating or making mistakes. Doing either was considered proof they were in league with the Devil.

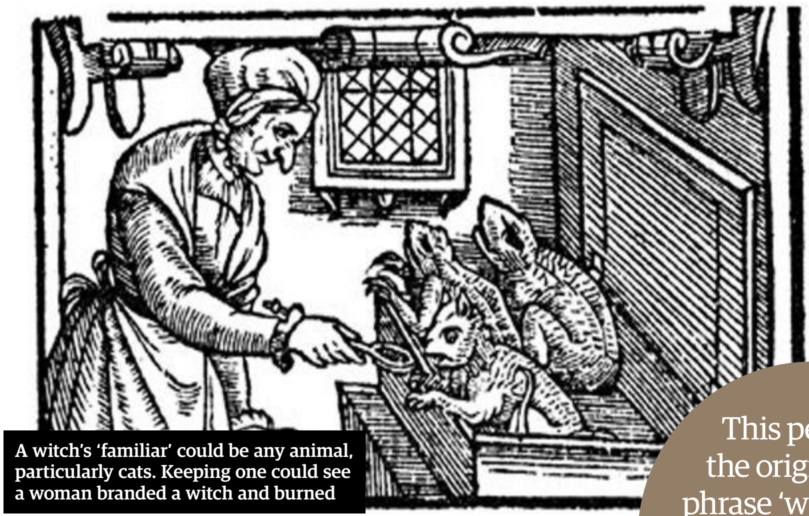
Searching a prisoner's body for 'witch's marks' was another easily-satisfied criteria. Physical oddities aren't seen as Satanic today but, according to witch hunters, birthmarks, sores, scars, moles and numerous other blemishes were variations of the 'Devil's Mark.' Anyone with even slight physical oddities could be sent to the stake.

'Pricking' or 'scratching' tests were also common. Professional 'prickers' used specially-designed needles to repeatedly probe and pierce a victim, believing witches didn't feel pain and wouldn't bleed. In practice this proved nothing, but supplied a steady stream of guilty witches. In England and Scotland it also enriched con artists using dulled needles, proving their ability as witch finders and guaranteeing future employment. Their work often meant innocent people were publicly burned.

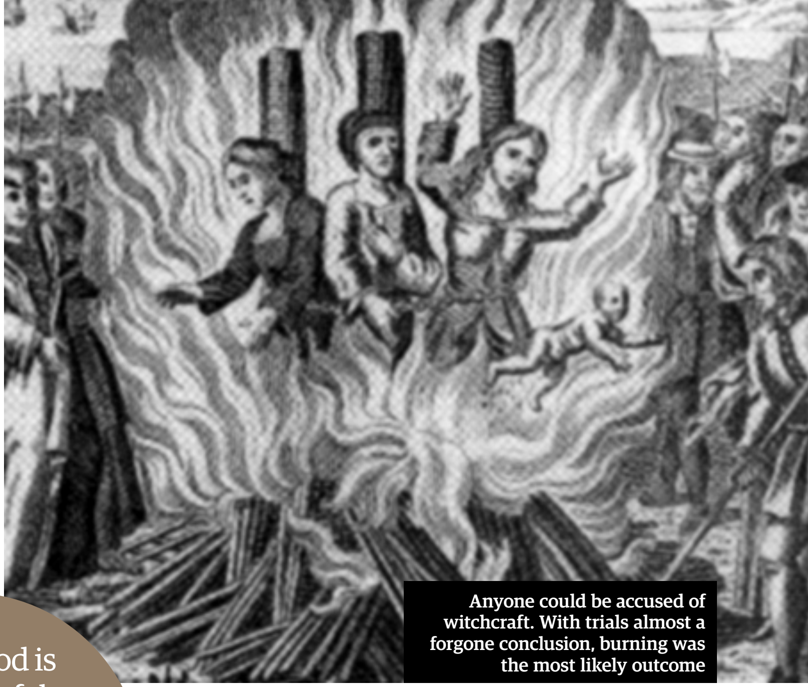
Scratching tests were equally fallacious but, at the time, believed valid. People allegedly possessed by Satan were encouraged to scratch a suspected witch until they drew blood. If the possessed person's condition improved, this was considered partial proof of witchcraft.

"Keeping a cat was taken by some as a sign of Satanic influence"


A witch burning in medieval Europe

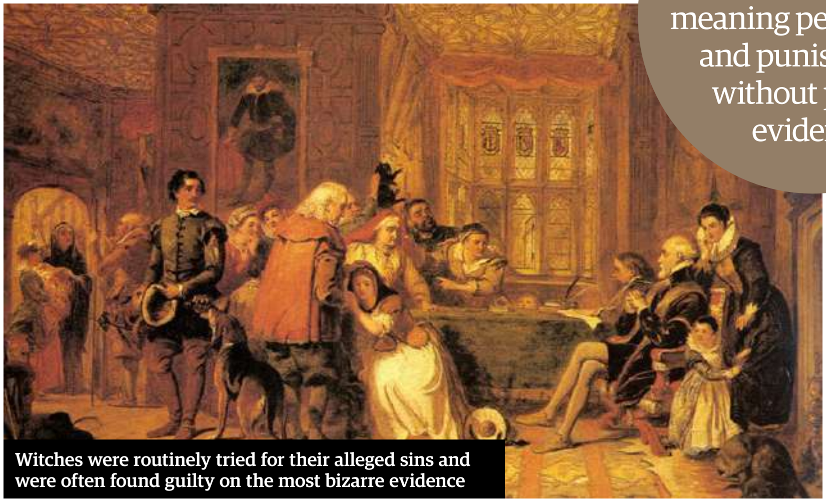


A witch's 'familiar' could be any animal, particularly cats. Keeping one could see a woman branded a witch and burned

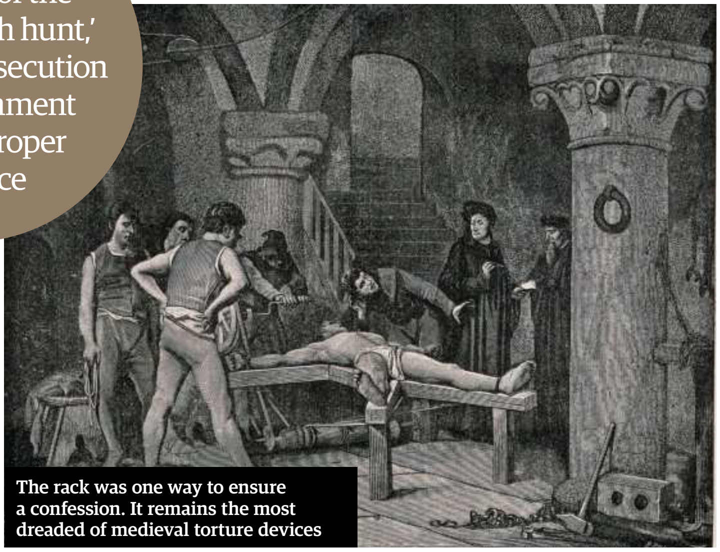


Anyone could be accused of witchcraft. With trials almost a forgone conclusion, burning was the most likely outcome

> This period is the origin of the phrase 'witch hunt,' meaning persecution and punishment without proper evidence



Witches were routinely tried for their alleged sins and were often found guilty on the most bizarre evidence



The rack was one way to ensure a confession. It remains the most dreaded of medieval torture devices

The witch hunts in particular contradict Christianity as we know it today. Many Christians now would regard them as brutal and unnecessary. Within their historical context, however, they make sense. Science hadn't advanced to today's levels and religion then derided scientific ideas now taken as fact. It seems bizarre today but, when people thought seeing Halley's Comet foretold the end of humanity, they really believed it.

Ordinary people were more likely to believe authority figures at that time and the Church represented authority. If the pope believed witches existed, that they served Satan and anyone not against them was with them, many took his word for it. When he wanted these dark forces stamped out, they agreed. The pope's word was spiritual law. In his own mind and millions of others, he was leading the fight against Satan for the soul of Christianity itself.

One body of opinion says that in pursuing spiritual corruption, the Church was corrupted. It's been suggested the Church claimed to save innocents and punish evil-doers while using terror to enforce social control. It could be said the Inquisition and witch hunts were self-perpetuating, needing heretics and witches to justify their persecution of religious and political opponents. That, while pursuing dark forces, they became one.

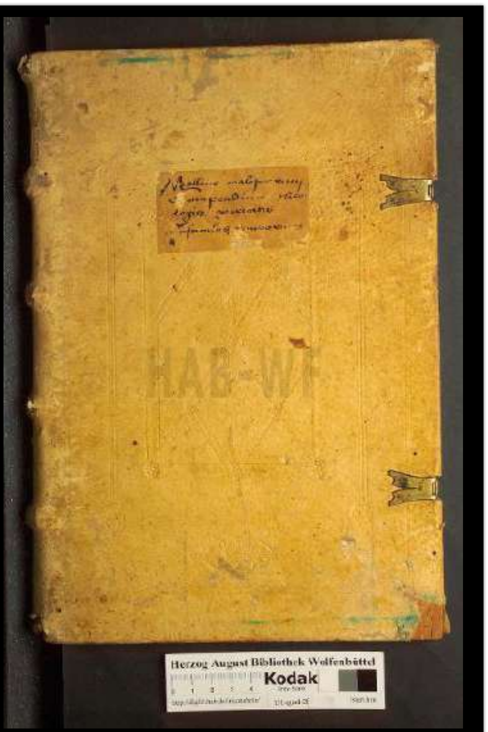
The 'Witch Hammer'

Alsace clergyman, Heinrich Kramer's, best-known work (and possibly his darkest deed) was the *Malleus Maleficarum*. Published in 1487, it became an important part of European witch hunts. Its cultural effect lasted several centuries.

The 'Witch Hammer' was essentially a step-by-step handbook for identifying and destroying witchcraft. Openly advocating torture to secure confessions and execution for those convicted, it became one of Europe's more popular theological texts. An accusation of witchcraft or heresy wasn't an automatic death sentence, but it could be levelled at anyone criticising, doubting or even debating Church teachings and doctrines. Witch hunts were as much about enforcing social control as religious fervour.

By today's standards, Kramer's writings read like the work of a madman but, at the time, belief in both witchcraft and the need to stamp it out was commonplace. The Catholic Church also held infinitely greater spiritual, religious and political power than it does today. It was keen to retain its power by whatever means available, and many Inquisitors genuinely believed they were doing the Lord's work.

Kramer's ideas, bizarre today, flourished within their own time. With the Church's backing they proved deadly to many thousands of people, innocent and guilty alike.



Malleus Maleficarum provided guidance to witch hunters. It was one of the most dangerous books in medieval Europe

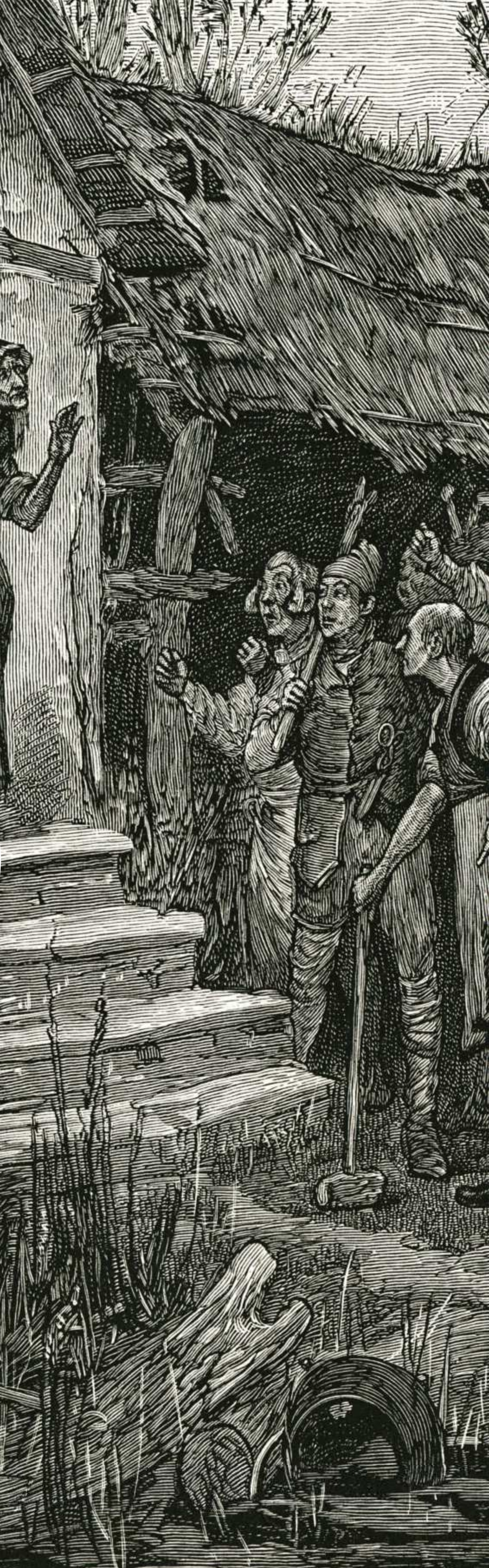
© GettyImages

Day in the life

A WITCH HUNTER

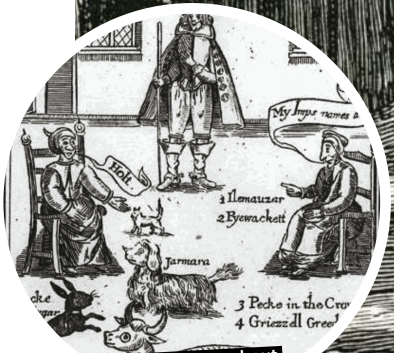
PUNISHING EVILDOERS AND BRINGING FIERY JUSTICE ACROSS THE LAND, ENGLAND, 17TH CENTURY

In the 14th and 15th centuries, witches started to be seen as devil-worshippers, working with Satan and gaining supernatural powers to do his evil work. The fear of witches was so great that individuals were employed to identify and punish witches. In England in the 1600s, witch hunting reached its climax. In the midst of the civil war, with no officials to oversee witchcraft prosecutions, witch hunters were free to traverse the country, offer their services to terrified towns and reap the financial benefits. Many believed they were doing the lord's work, but others were willing to lie, cheat and sacrifice lives to achieve wealth and respect.



ARRIVE AT DESTINATION

Witch hunters quickly moved from one town to another once their business was complete. Matthew Hopkins, the most famous witch hunter in English history, offered his services across eastern England. Witch hunters were in great demand and town authorities would request their services, but often the hunter stopped at towns and villages along the way.



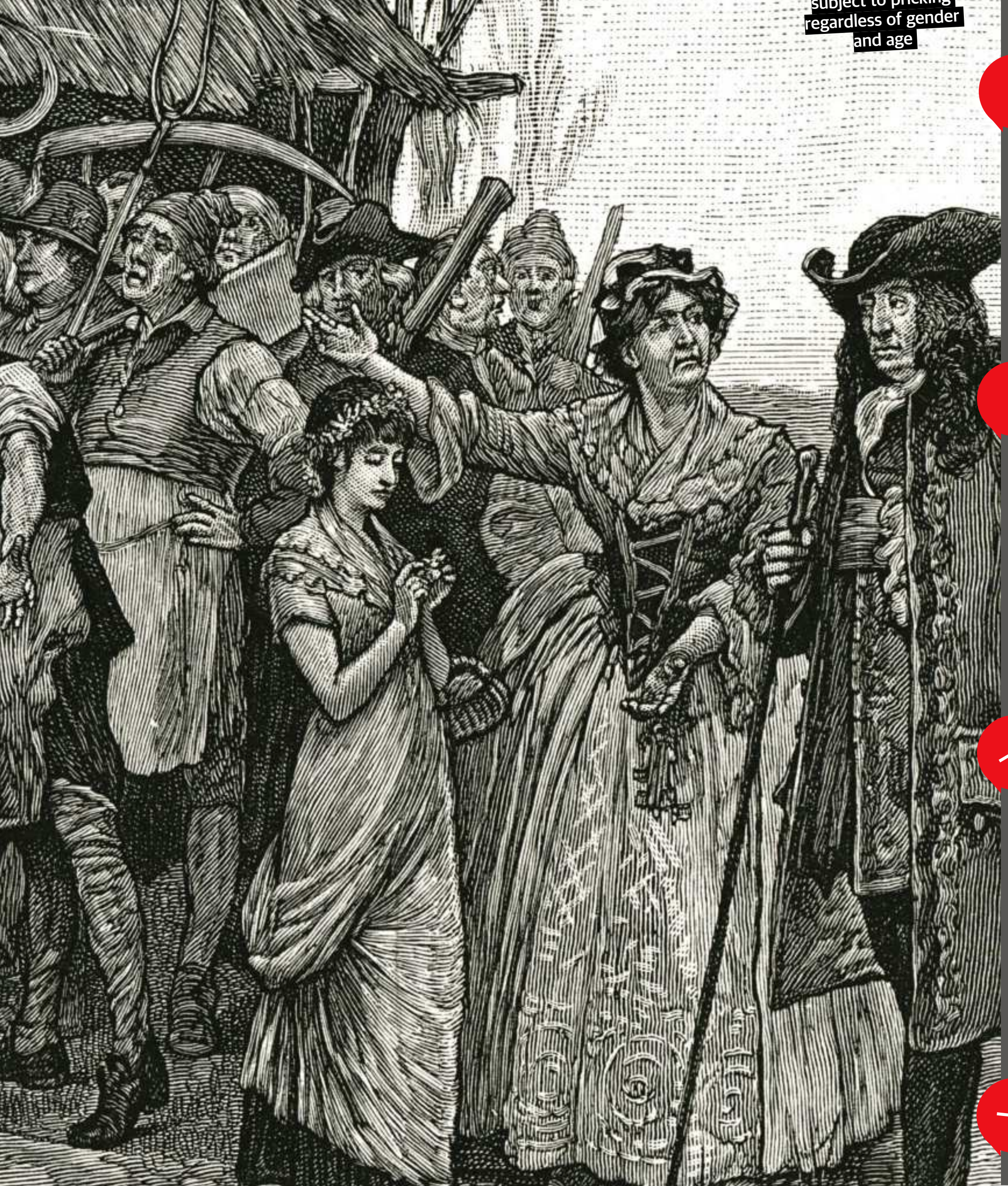
Hopkins wrote about his experiences hunting witches in his book *The Discovery Of Witches*

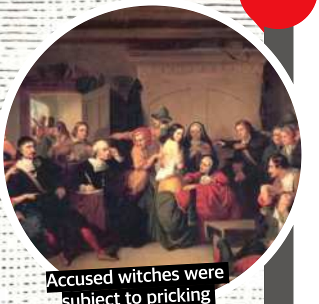
ACCUSE SOMEONE

The way most witch hunters operated was to investigate the gossip circulating around a town and turn it into a formal accusation of witchcraft. It is of no coincidence that the accused were likely to be those on the edges of society. Most were poor, disfigured or old, and female. This wasn't always the case - high-ranking members of society were occasionally charged and men were equally as likely to be accused in some parts of the world.

IMPRISON THE WITCH

Once they identified the 'culprit', the witch hunter would arrest the person and imprison them. The use of torture during witchcraft trials was illegal in England, but witch hunters had ways of getting around this. One favoured method of obtaining a confession was sleep and food deprivation - after a few nights, dazed victims were willing to say anything. Those who remained defiant could be given harsher treatment, such as being forced to walk around their cell for days until their feet bled.





Accused witches were subject to pricking regardless of gender and age

FIND THE WITCHES' MARK

In the 16th and 17th century, there was a common belief that all witches bore a witches' mark that would not bleed when pricked. This prompted the practice of 'pricking', in which the accused would be stripped, shaved and searched for marks – usually birthmarks or moles. Pins were driven into the skin to search for any spot that didn't bleed. Some witch hunters used needles with retractable points to give the impression that a mark had been found. A witches' mark wouldn't be enough for a conviction, but it certainly added to the evidence.

TRIAL BY WATER

If the accused still refused to confess, they would be subjected to the swimming test. This ordeal was based on the assumption that since witches had renounced their baptism, water would 'reject' them – meaning they would float. The accused was strapped to a stool or chair and dunked repeatedly into water. This brutal method had been outlawed in 1219, but made a comeback in the 17th century.

INTERROGATE THE WITCH

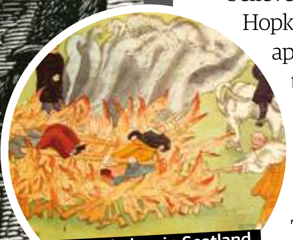
Once the witch hunter had publicly humiliated the accused, it was time to subject them to intense questioning. Witch hunters favoured leading questions that assumed the victim was guilty, such as: "How did you become acquainted with the devil?" The accused only needed to nod, and the witch finder would fill in the details. Special courts were set up across the country to deal with the witch hysteria, and a trial in Chelmsford in 1645 condemned and executed 19 people for witchcraft.

PUNISH THE WITCH

Once the witch hunter 'proved' the accused's guilt, they could hand out a variety of punishments. Some were imprisoned, others were flogged, the occasional fortunate 'witch' got away with a fine while some faced exile. However, many more faced capital punishment, and the methods varied from being burned at the stake to hanged or beheaded, depending on where they were convicted. Such public displays of execution did nothing to lessen the witch-hunt hysteria gripping the nation.

COLLECT YOUR FEE

Being a witch hunter paid very well, and many believe this was the motivation for their work. Hopkins' fees could be as high as £23 a town, approximately £2,000 today, and this was on top of his travelling costs. Once the witch hunter had made a name for themselves they could hike their price up. Several towns visited by Hopkins had to create a special local tax just to afford his services. The fear surrounding witches was so great that people paid this without much complaint.



Convicted witches in Scotland, France and Switzerland faced being burned at the stake

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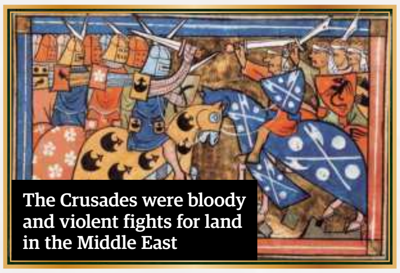
Controversies in Christianity

The history of Christianity is littered with stories of persecution, fighting and unsavoury behaviour; discover some of the biggest scandals that have rocked the religion



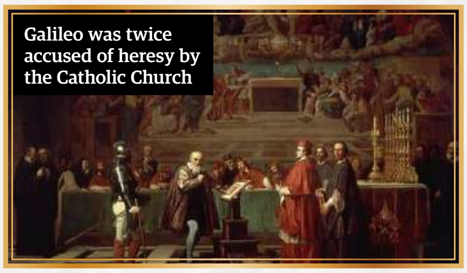
The Crusades were bloody and violent fights for land in the Middle East

The Crusades

Where: Jerusalem, Israel

When: 1095-1291

Jerusalem has been a significant city for Christians, Jews and Muslims for centuries, and as a result has been the focus of many religious conflicts. These started after the Turks banned Christian pilgrims from the city in 1087, prompting Pope Urban II to promise crusaders forgiveness of their sins if they could win it back. Over the next few centuries there were nine separate Crusades to recover the Holy Land, and each time the crusaders either failed to win or failed to keep any of the territory they had conquered. They did, however, gain a great deal of knowledge from the more scientifically and culturally advanced Muslims.



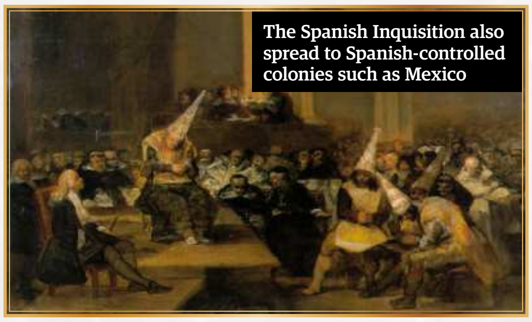
Galileo was twice accused of heresy by the Catholic Church

Galileo's conviction

Where: Italy

When: 1633

When Italian physicist and astronomer Galileo Galilei published evidence proving the Earth revolves around the Sun, the Catholic Church deemed him heretical and summoned him to appear before the Inquisition in Rome. According to scripture, the Earth was considered the unmovable centre of the universe, and could not be disputed. Galileo was found guilty by the Holy Office and banned from publishing his work. He was also sentenced to life imprisonment, but this was later reduced to house arrest, where he spent the rest of his life.



The Spanish Inquisition also spread to Spanish-controlled colonies such as Mexico

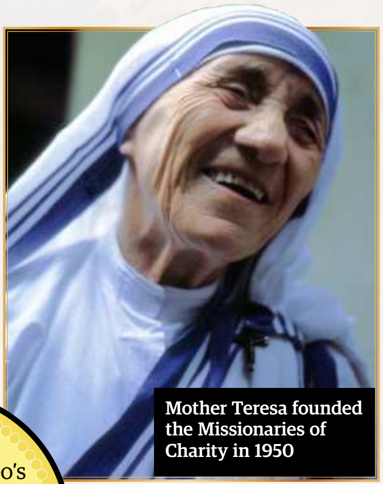
The Spanish Inquisition

Where: Spain

When: 1478-1834

The Spanish Inquisition was just one of several inquisitions established between the 12th and 19th centuries, but is infamous for its methods of torture. 'Inquisition' refers to the tribunal court system used by the Catholic Church to root out heretics, but the one in Spain was established by the Catholic monarchy. All Jews and Muslims in the country had to convert to Catholicism or leave, and King Ferdinand II and Queen Isabella used the Spanish Inquisition to assess the converts' dedication. Those accused were sometimes tortured to extract a confession of heresy and sentenced to life in prison if they didn't confess.

In 1992, 359 years after Galileo's trial, Pope John Paul II officially declared that the astronomer was right about the movements of the Earth



Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity in 1950

Glorifying suffering

Where: Kolkata, India

When: 1950-97

Mother Teresa, the Albanian nun who won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work with the poor in India, has been criticised for 'glorifying' their suffering instead of relieving it. This claim came from a group of academics at the University of Montreal and has been seconded by journalists and medical professionals who claim the facilities run by her Missionaries of Charity organisation provided inadequate patient care despite receiving hundreds of millions in donations. Such criticisms have been ignored by the Catholic Church, who chose to canonise her in 2016.

SPOTLIGHT
ANONYMOUS

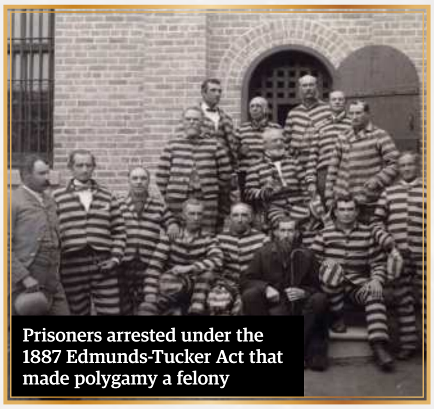
The Boston Globe's Spotlight team received a Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for their coverage

Spotlight scandal

Where: Boston, USA

When: 2002

On 6 January 2002, ran with the front page headline; "Church allowed abuse by priest for years" and thrust the issue of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church into the public domain. The newspaper's team of investigative journalists had uncovered the widespread abuse of children by several of the district's priests and revealed a cover-up that saw those accused being removed and allowed to work in other parishes. The story encouraged other victims to come forward and soon similar patterns of abuse were uncovered elsewhere in the United States and several other countries.



Prisoners arrested under the 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Act that made polygamy a felony

Mormon polygamy

Where: United States

When: 1852-90

Also known as plural marriage, polygamy was practised by many members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for the last part of the 19th century. Despite exposing the church to hostility from the outside world, Mormon leaders preached it was the will of God. However, increasing pressure from the US government eventually led the church to ban polygamy, and today anyone who practises it is excommunicated.

Mother Teresa has been criticised for allegedly encouraging nuns at the Missionaries of Charity to secretly baptise dying patients, regardless of religious beliefs

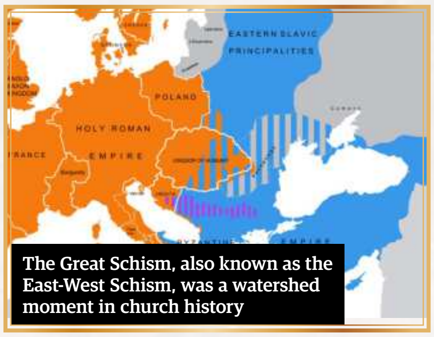
Florence Li Tim-Oi was ordained due to a shortage of priests during World War II

Female priests

Where: Hong Kong

When: 1944

For centuries only men could be ordained in the major Christian religions, but in 1944 things began to change. That year in Hong Kong, Florence Li Tim-Oi became the first Anglican female priest, paving the way for the Right Reverend Libby Lane to be consecrated as the Church of England's first female bishop in 2015. However, many religions still do not allow the ordination of women, including the Catholic Church, which has said it will never change.



The Great Schism, also known as the East-West Schism, was a watershed moment in church history

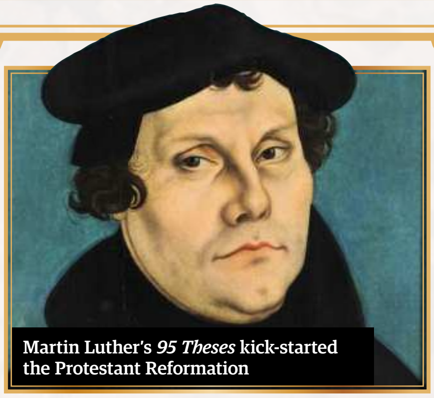
The Great Schism

Where: Europe

When: 1054

When the Roman Empire fell in 476, divisions in political rule gave rise to differences in the beliefs and practices of Western and Eastern Christians. This led to the Great Schism; a rift between the leaders of Rome in the West and Constantinople in the East. The rift has never been resolved and resulted in the break between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

The archbishop of Boston, Cardinal Bernard Law, resigned over his role in the cover-up of the sexual abuse carried out by the district's priests



Martin Luther's *95 Theses* kick-started the Protestant Reformation

Protestant Reformation

Where: Europe

When: 1517-1648

The printing press gave rise to perhaps the biggest religious upheaval in Europe, as it allowed German monk Martin Luther and his fellow reformers to spread their message. Luther criticised the pope's sale of indulgences, and inspired German peasants to revolt against the Catholic Church. Similar movements began erupting all over Europe, resulting in the establishment of several different branches of Christianity.

All sex acts must be both unitive and procreative

Contraception

Where: Worldwide

When: Ongoing

The three major branches of Christianity (Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism) all condemned contraception before the 20th century. While Catholicism allows natural family planning, artificial contraception is deemed intrinsically evil. In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI asserted that handing out condoms is not the solution to combatting AIDS and might make the problem worse, despite data stating that condom use could reduce the risk of HIV transmission by approximately 85 per cent.

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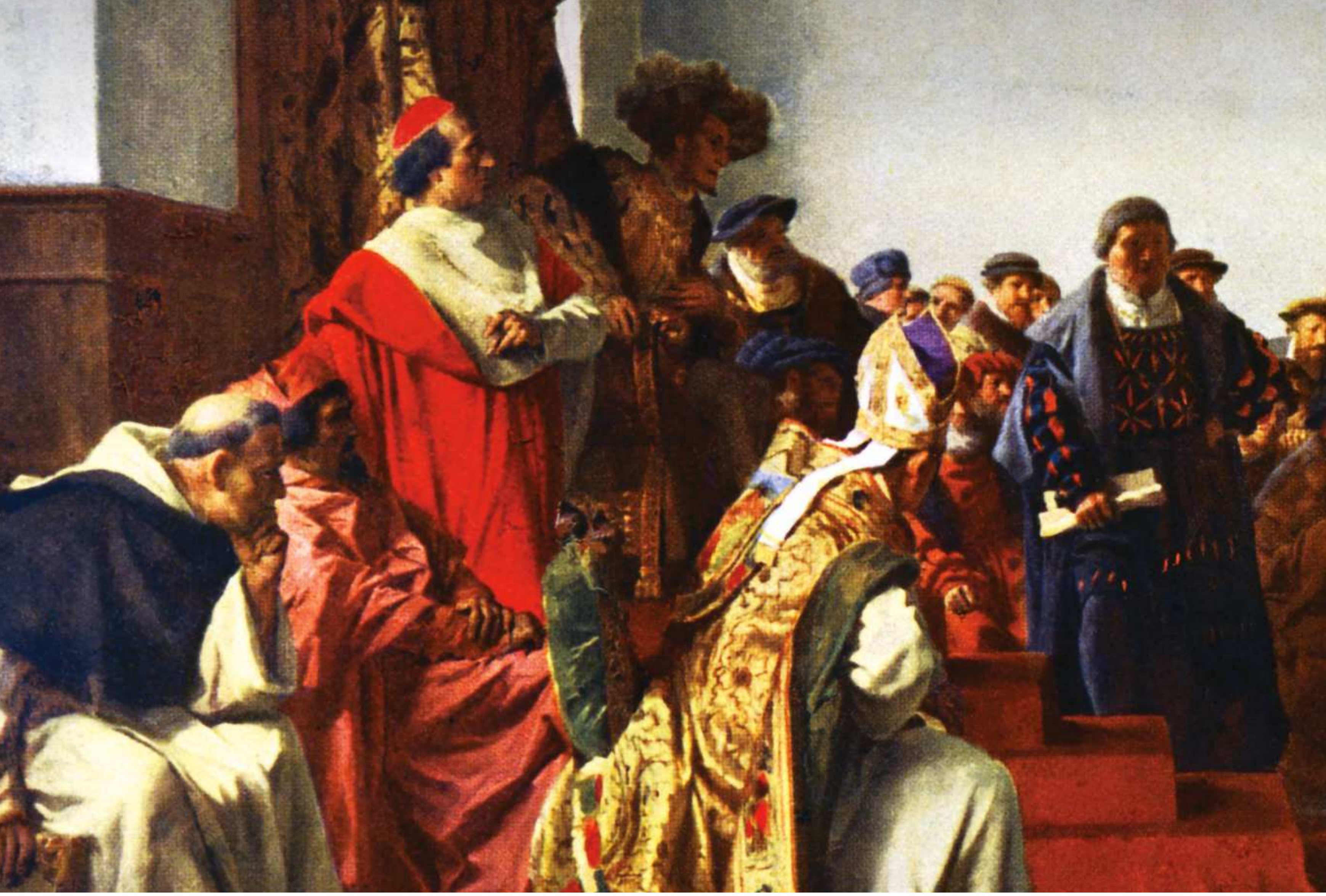

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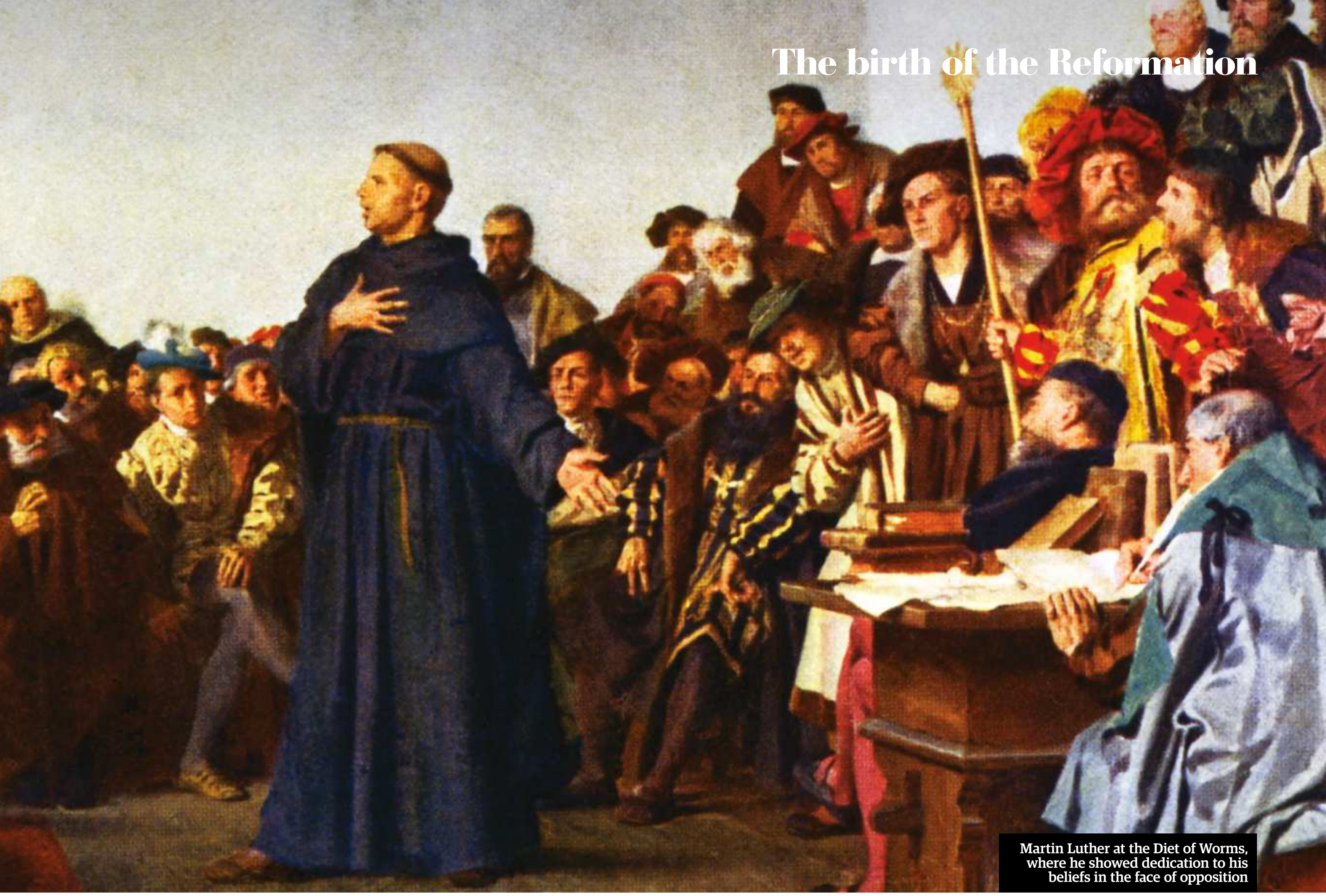
The birth of the Reformation

The greatest climacteric in Christian history began 500 years ago with Martin Luther's initial protest. The world's religious landscape would never be the same again

We are apt to think of the late medieval church as a mire of abuses: crowded with disgruntled parishioners and scandalous priests. From this perspective, the 16th century Reformation can seem inevitable, a necessary cleansing of the stables. While it is true that dynamic figures such as the Bohemian Jan Hus and the Englishman John Wyclif made urgent calls for reform during the 14th and 15th centuries, we should not assume that everything was rotten in the state of Christendom. There was excess and corruption, just as there always had been, but in many ways the devotional life of Europe remained in tolerably good health. Many thought that change was necessary, but no one anticipated a revolution. Hardly anyone saw the Reformation coming.

This makes the developments of the 16th century, inaugurated by Martin Luther's protest, all the more remarkable. In the past, dissent had been localised and ultimately snuffed out. This time around, it rapidly gathered momentum and tore the continent apart. It is always worth remembering, however, that this was not Luther's original intention. At the outset, in 1517, he was a little-known professor at a lacklustre provincial university who simply wanted to provoke academic debate. By the time of his death, in 1546, he would be lionised by one of his closest friends as "the charioteer of Israel who has led the Church in these



Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms, where he showed dedication to his beliefs in the face of opposition

last times." A lot can certainly happen in a little under 30 years.

Born at Eisleben, Saxony, in 1483, Luther proved a gifted student and, after university studies, seemed destined for a legal career. Terrible weather intervened. In 1505, Luther was caught in a severe thunderstorm and, fearing for his life, made a pledge to St Anne that, should he survive, he would take up a monastic vocation. It seems likely this was simply the catalyst for a decision that Luther was already edging towards but, sure enough, he headed for the strict Augustinian monastery at Erfurt.

He would be ordained, pursue theological studies, both at Erfurt and Wittenberg, and embark upon a teaching career. These, though, were troubled years for Luther. He found it impossible to conceive how he, or any person, could merit the precious gift of salvation. He began to find answers through his reading of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. No matter how wretched and corrupt human beings might be, God still offered them the hope of eternal bliss. The single prerequisite was belief. "Faith alone," Luther later wrote, "without works, justifies, frees and saves." Luther did not reach his conclusions in a single, eureka moment, but this concept of being saved, not as a result of our puny actions, but through faith and the extraordinary, unmerited generosity of God, would emerge as one of the cornerstones of Protestantism.

Tied to such musings was Luther's scepticism, or outright dismay, regarding some of the central beliefs and practices of the established Church. Indulgences came in for particularly sharp criticism. These documents, granted in return for good deeds or even financial payment, were held to provide remission for sins and reduce the period of punishment in purgatory. Luther found this notion, and particularly its commercialisation, deeply offensive, not least when a wide-ranging indulgence-peddling campaign was launched in Germany, chiefly aimed at raising funds for the rebuilding of Rome's St Peter's Basilica.

During his career, Luther produced 544 books, pamphlets and articles. In 1523 alone he brought 55 works to the presses

This was the spark for Luther's famous *Ninety-five Theses*, penned in 1517. Though routinely, and not unreasonably, regarded as the starting gun of the Reformation, the theses were only intended to provoke scholarly discussion about the rectitude of indulgences. Historians continue to argue over whether the theses were nailed to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, and there is every chance that this seemingly epochal event was a later, mythologising concoction. The crucial point, however, is that advertising academic debating points by displaying them on church doors was in fact an entirely routine practice and, if Luther followed suit in October 1517, it would not have caused a great stir.

The truly significant move was sending copies of the theses, along with provocative letters, to two leading Churchmen: the bishop of Brandenburg and, crucially, the archbishop of Mainz. Luther's fundamental criticisms were not especially novel, but the underlying theology held latent potential for disruption. Key issues about ecclesiastical authority and topics as sensitive as grace and salvation were at stake. Though Luther presumably did not anticipate the consequences, his actions demanded a response and over the coming two years he was summoned to Rome (an invitation he declined) and quizzed by uneasy theologians.

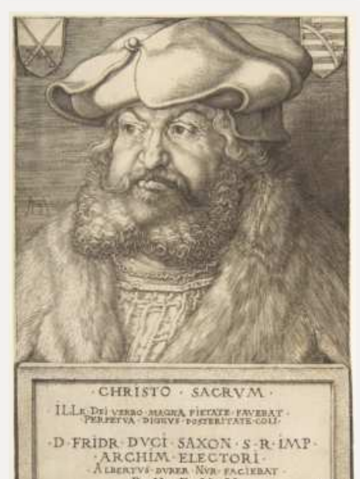
Matters came to a head at Leipzig in 1519. Johann Eck, a skilled debater, challenged Luther's ideas, made comparisons between Luther and Jan Hus, and through his rhetoric pushed Luther towards outbursts he would probably have preferred to avoid. "Are you the only one who knows anything?" Eck asked at one point. "Except for you, is all the Church in error?" Luther's reply was perilously blunt: "I want to believe freely and be a slave to the authority of no one, whether council, university or pope. I will confidently confess what appears to me to be true, whether it has been asserted by a Catholic or a heretic." The touchpaper had been lit.

The birth of the Reformation

The Luther Denkmal (monument) in Worms. The great reformer of Wittenberg is flanked by other leading figures of the Reformation

The papacy's response was initially sluggish but was ultimately ferocious. By 1520 Luther was saying some withering things about the court of Rome: it had become "the most lawless den of thieves, the most shameless of all brothels, the very kingdom of sin, death and hell." In June of 1520, the pope issued a bull, *Exsurge Domine*, which called on Luther to recant. "Foxes have arisen" in the vineyard of the Lord, the document warned, and "the wild boar from the forest seeks to destroy it." In Germany, "lying teachers are arising... their tongues are fire, a restless evil, full of deadly poison. They have bitter zeal, contention in their hearts, and boast and lie against the truth."

Luther publicly burned the document in December and, in short measure, a bull of excommunication arrived. It denounced the Wittenberg professor as an "accursed heretic" and the "slave of a depraved mind." Strong stuff, but Luther's trials were far from over. He now had to face the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, at the Diet of Worms. Luther had hoped for a meaningful debate but was simply instructed to renounce the contents of his books. With no small courage he declared that if he did so "all I shall achieve is to add strength to tyranny and open not the windows but the doors to this monstrous godlessness." Declared a heretic and an outlaw, Luther's life and liberty were in peril so, on the way back to Wittenberg, a fake kidnapping was arranged with Luther being transferred to the safe harbour of the Wartburg Fortress.

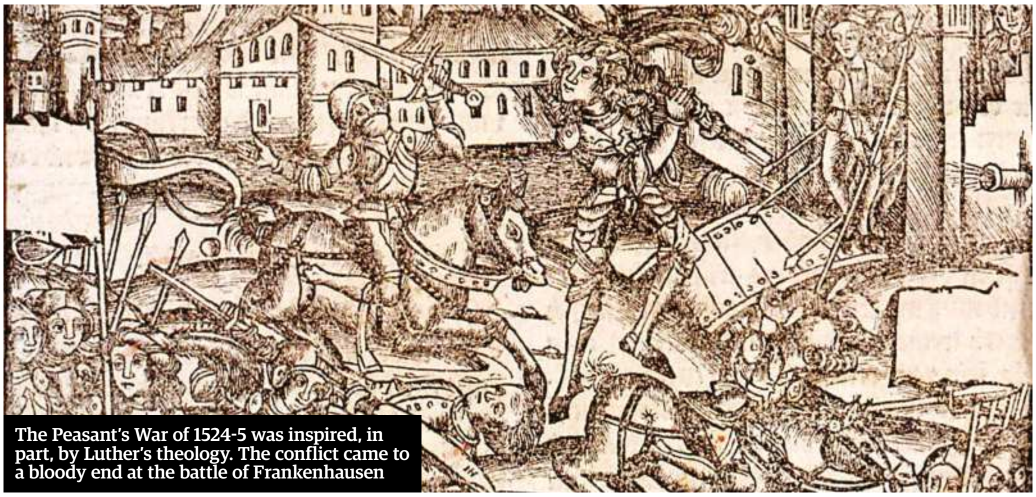

·CHRISTO · SACRVM·
ILLE·DEI·VERBO·MAGNA·PIETATE·FAVEBAT·
·PERPETVA·DIGNVS·POSTERITATE·COLI·
·D·FRIDR·DVCI·SAXON·S·R·IMP·
·ARCHIM·ELECTORI·
·ALBERTVS·DVRER·NVR·FACIEBAT·

Frederick of Saxony founded the university at Wittenberg and, despite his conservative Catholic sympathies, protected Luther from his foes

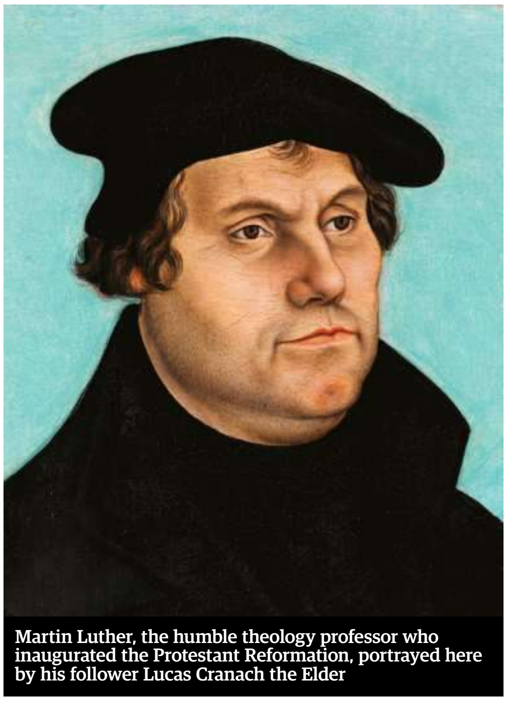
Luther, nicknamed the 'Nightingale of Wittenberg,' was known for his fine singing voice

Here, Luther completed his translation, into German, of the New Testament. The idea of vernacular Scripture was not novel (the medieval era had seen its share of Biblical translations) but it gained new momentum during the 16th century and would go on to become another of the defining characteristics of the Reformation. Luther held to the principle of sola scriptura: that scripture alone was the guide to faith and the blueprint for every aspect of devotion and ritual. Such a precious commodity was to be available to all the faithful. Luther's translation of the complete Bible appeared in 1534 and, over the next 40 years, 100,000 copies were produced.

The power of print reached far beyond Holy Writ, of course. Luther began to compose influential and best-selling tracts in the late 1510s and he



The Peasant's War of 1524-5 was inspired, in part, by Luther's theology. The conflict came to a bloody end at the battle of Frankenhausen



Martin Luther, the humble theology professor who inaugurated the Protestant Reformation, portrayed here by his follower Lucas Cranach the Elder

was responsible for a fifth of all Protestant literary output during the 1520s. If any single factor explains the startling success of his movement, and all Protestant movements that followed, it is this alliance with the fledgling technology of the printing press. No previous dissenting Christians had enjoyed such a tool with which to spread their message.

It is crucial to stress that, even after the showdowns with emperor and papacy, Luther was a long way from establishing a robust and clearly defined new Christian denomination. At this early stage, hope of reconciliation was not lost and reform from within still seemed feasible. Events were quickly spiralling out of control, however, and Luther's own success made irreversible schism increasingly likely. Across the German-speaking parts of the Empire, Luther's ideas were winning influential support. At Nuremberg, in 1521, reformed preaching was permitted and other towns and cities, like Ulm and Strasbourg, followed suit. Lofty princes such as Albrecht of Brandenburg-Ansbach and Philipp of Hesse also joined the ranks.

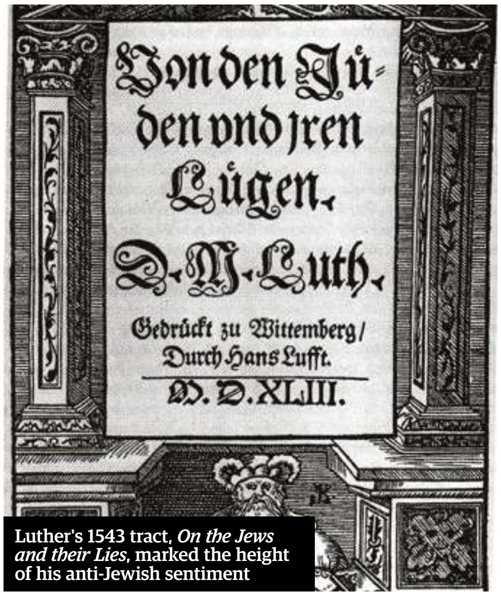
Less welcome, from Luther's point of view, was the recruitment of his message by the German peasants and farmers who rose in rebellion between 1524 and 1525. At first, in his *Admonition to Peace*, Luther accepted that the rebels had some legitimate complaints, while regretting their tendency to justify disobedience through appeal to the Gospels. By the time he wrote *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*, Luther's innate social conservatism was given full voice. The powers-that-be ought to "smite, slay and stab" the insurgents, "remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful or devilish

> Luther once found a dog in his room and, thinking it to be Satan, threw it out of the window

Luther and Judaism

In his 1523 tract, *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, Luther argued for the toleration of Germany's Jewish population, going so far as suggesting that Jews should be able to pursue careers in any given profession.

This did not signal affection or admiration of Judaism, however. The goal was to treat Jewish people with a modicum of dignity so that they might be more likely to convert to Christianity. Luther's profound theological distaste for Judaism was always unflinching. Tellingly, the suggestions of the 1523 tract were never enacted in any Lutheran territories and, through the 1530s, Luther's attitudes hardened. By 1543 he was composing one of his most vicious texts, and one that has always tarnished his reputation: *On the Jews and their Lies*. In its pages, Luther urged the razing of Jewish synagogues and buildings, the destruction of Jewish books, and the prohibition of rabbinical teaching. Jews, he barked, had proven stubborn through their refusal to accept Christ: they were as hard as "a stick, as stone, as iron, as the devil." They remained the "bitter, virulent, and vicious enemies of Christians" and the wisest policy would be to expel them and "be rid of the unbearable, devilish burden." Luther would still be making such pronouncements in his very last sermon of February 1546.



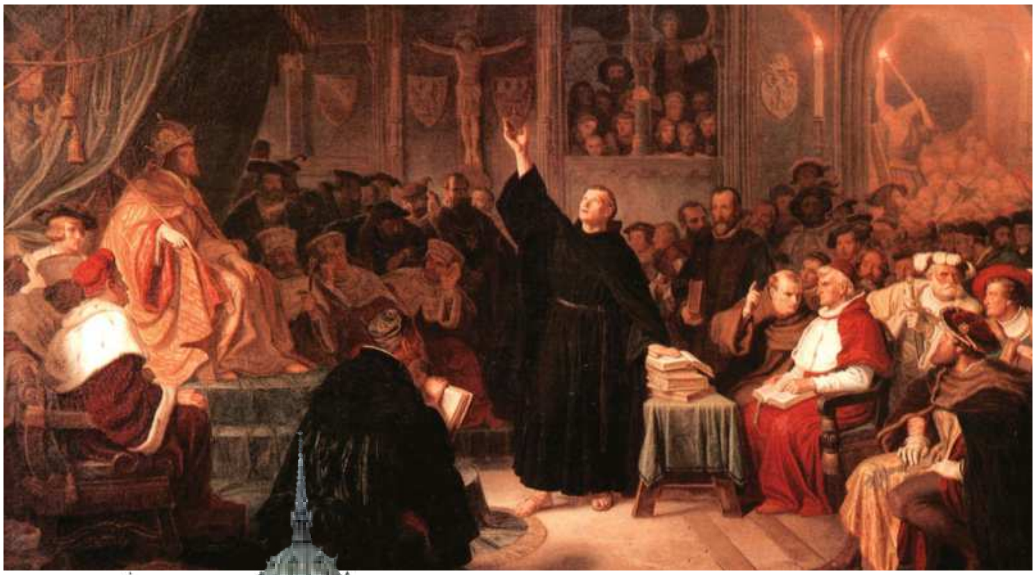
Von den Jü-
den vnd jren
Lügen.
D. M. Luth.
Gedrůckt zu Wittemberg /
Durch Hans Lufft.
M. D. XLIII.

Luther's 1543 tract, *On the Jews and their Lies*, marked the height of his anti-Jewish sentiment than a rebel… it is just as when one must kill a mad dog." Luther talked in terms of two kingdoms – the secular and the religious – but this did not excuse the rejection of legitimate political authority. He believed in the liberty of Christians, but he could not tolerate his ideas being hijacked by rebels. From now on, the Lutheran Reformation was to be of the magisterial variety: overseen by territorial and municipal rulers.

This need to sustain order permeated Luther's activities during the 1520s and 1530s. He had returned to Wittenberg from the Wartburg in 1522 precisely in order to check the radicalism of overly enthusiastic followers who, in his absence, had begun to behave as if they had "devoured the Holy Spirit, feathers and all." Luther would always insist on being the custodian of his own message. In the same spirit, he often took the lead in defining the ecclesiastical structures and devotional priorities of his emerging Church and generations of Lutherans would be guided by the pithy, accessible catechisms he produced in 1529.

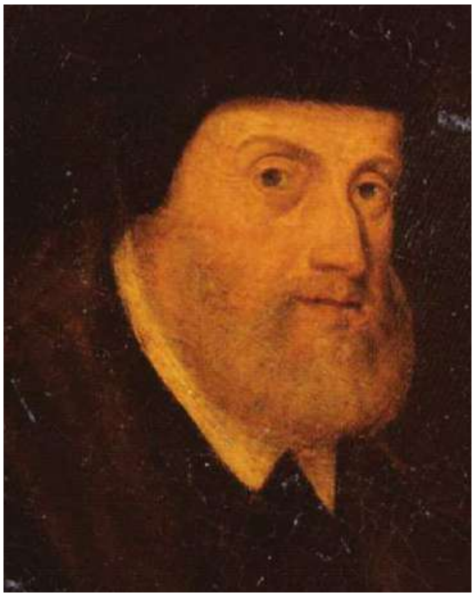
Luther's was not the only version of Reform, however, and this posed daunting problems for any hope of Protestant unity. To the south, in Zurich, Ulrich Zwingli had been forging a more radical vision since 1522, marked by more radical theologising and iconoclastic excess. In 1529 Luther met with Zwingli at the colloquy of Marburg, and it was a disaster. The chief sticking point was the Eucharist. Luther had no time for the Catholic notion of transubstantiation, in which the substance of bread and wine transformed into the substance of Christ's body and blood, preferring the idea of consubstantiation: the substance of the bread and wine coexisting with the body and blood of Christ without what Luther regarded as some over-philosophised magical change. Zwingli, by contrast, insisted that the Eucharist was a symbolic memorial of Christ's sacrifice, no more no less, and that any notion of the Real Presence was abhorrent. This seemingly abstruse point of theology, one among many differences, made any meaningful reconciliation between the two men impossible and signalled a division between Lutheranism and the so-called Reformed Churches,

> Luther liked his beer, declaring that the more you drink, the more you sleep; and the more you sleep, the less you sin



1521
The Diet of Worms

Following Luther's excommunication in January 1521, Luther is summoned to the Diet of Worms, the Empire's highest legislative body. Here he faces the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (pictured). Rather than the theological debate anticipated by Luther, he is simply shown his books and told to renounce them. After a day's consideration, Luther refuses to comply. Having been denounced as a heretic and an outlaw, Luther's life is in danger and his protector, Frederick the Wise of Saxony, stages a mock kidnapping on the route back to Wittenberg. Luther is taken to the safety of the Wartburg Fortress where he remains for 11 months.



1517
The Ninety-five Theses

Historians differ over whether Luther nailed his famous theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg Castle (pictured), but the posting of points for academic debate was common practice and would not have ruffled feathers. Printed editions of the theses had begun to appear in Nuremberg, Leipzig and Basel by December. A tract, in German, summarising his arguments appeared in 1518 (the *Sermon on Indulgence and Grace*) and had gone through 12 editions by the end of the year. Luther was summoned to Augsburg in August 1518 to be quizzed by the papal legate, Thomas Cajetan, where his recantation was demanded but very much not forthcoming.

Timeline

1483

Birth of Martin Luther
Born in Eisleben, Saxony, 10 November, Martin was the son of Hans Luder, a copper miner, and Margarethe. The couple would have eight other children. Martin later altered the spelling of his surname.

1501

Luther enrols at University of Erfurt
Luther would study the liberal arts at this centre of humanist thought and become Master of Arts in 1505. He embarked on higher legal studies.

1505

Luther enters the monastery
Caught in a storm, Luther makes a pledge to St Anne that he will become a monk if he survives. He goes to the monastery of the order of Augustinian Eremites.

1507

Luther ordained as priest
Also in this year, Luther makes his first visit to the recently founded Wittenberg University. He gains a lower theology degree in 1507 and his doctorate in 1512.

1519

Disputation at Leipzig
The Ingolstadt theologian Johann Eck engages with Luther and presses him to make bolder statements than Luther likely intended. Luther is compared to 14th century heretic, Jan Hus.

1520

The first major works
Three epochal tracts appear: *The Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, *The Freedom of the Christian Man* (both in German), and the *Latinate Babylonian Captivity*.

with Calvinism soon to follow in Zwingli's footsteps, that would endure.

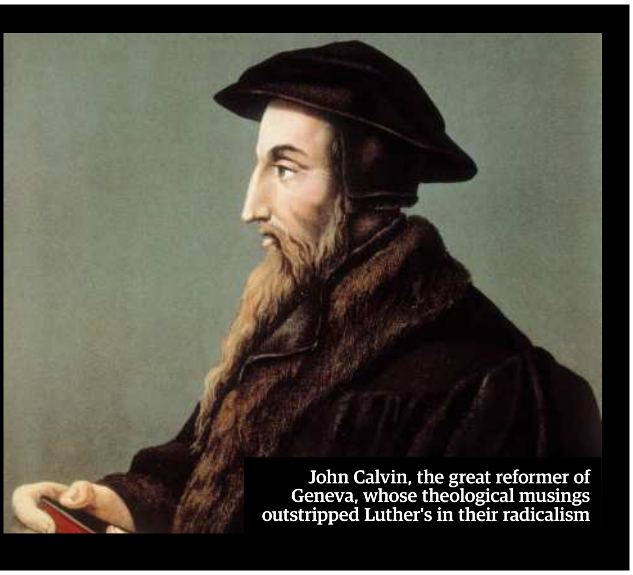
This sense of fragmentation would come to define Protestantism. Differences over doctrines of salvation, ecclesiastical structures, the number and nature of sacraments, and countless other fault lines emerged. It was impossible to contain what Luther had unleashed within a single vision of what Protestantism ought to be. Luther's version claims primacy in terms of chronology, however, and while a product of its time and place, it did reach back to some of the aspirations of the medieval firebrands. The difference was that it spread and endured. By the time of Luther's death in 1546, the religious landscape of Germany was in chaos. The patchwork nature of the political map meant that Catholic and Lutheran towns and principalities sat side by side and would shortly fall into military conflict with each other. A compromise of sorts arrived in 1555 with the Peace of Augsburg. From now on, the local ruler was at liberty to choose between Catholicism and Lutheranism and impose it upon his subjects. It was a messy solution but one that would have been unthinkable just half a century earlier, when almost everyone believed in the fiction of a united Christendom. Wittingly or not, Martin Luther had extinguished that dream.

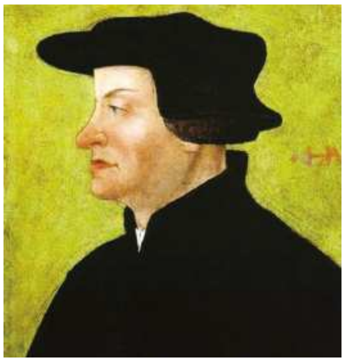
> Though a sophisticated theologian, Luther displayed the common touch in his writings, with homely images

After Luther's bold stand at the Diet of Worms in 1521, he was whisked off to the safety of the Wartburg Fortress

The Reformation expands

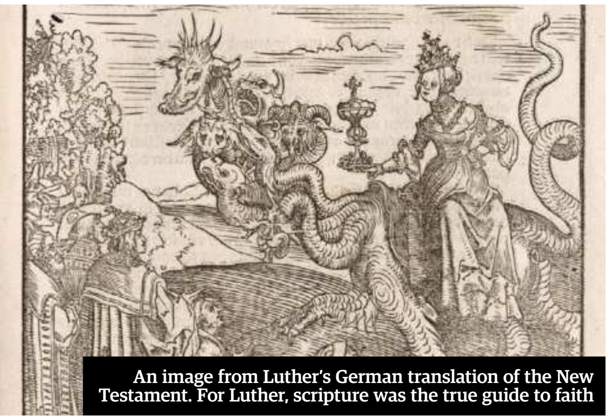
Born at Noyon, north east France, in 1509, John Calvin abandoned early plans to enter the priesthood in order to study law. In Paris, he was carried by the reformist tides of Humanism and, by the early 1530s, had been won over to the Protestant message. Fearing for his safety, he left France in 1534 and, in 1536, produced the first version of his great theological work, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. In the same year he arrived in Geneva where the reformer Guillaume Farel convinced him to share in the work of creating his version of a godly city. Calvin's rigour led to his banishment in 1538 but, after a spell in Strasbourg, he was invited back in 1541. From then until his death in 1564, Calvin took the leading role in Geneva's religious transformation and helped to shape a culture in which, through the work of the consistory court, morality was closely monitored and corrected. Calvin argued for the untrammelled authority of Scripture, inaugurated new ecclesiastical structures which did away with the old priestly caste, and developed a radical theological vision. The centrepiece was the doctrine of double predestination. Flawed, corrupt human beings could expect to play no role in decisions about their salvation. They were simply bound either for eternal bliss or perdition. Calvinism would become the most influential of Protestant denominations, spreading as far as Scotland, the fringes of Eastern Europe, and North America. Debates about the specifics of Calvinist doctrine, with rigorists battling moderates, would rumble on for centuries.


John Calvin, the great reformer of Geneva, whose theological musings outstripped Luther's in their radicalism



1529
Speyer and Marburg

At the Colloquy of Marburg, the Lutheran prince Philipp of Hesse hopes to reconcile the leaders of the Swiss and German Reformations. Disagreements over the Eucharist make it impossible for Luther to reach accord with the leader of reform in Zurich, Ulrich Zwingli (pictured). At the Diet of Speyer, five Lutheran princes launch a formal protestation because earlier freedom for rulers to determine how to respond to Reformation within their own territories is rescinded. The use of the word Protestant, referring to this event, comes into use from this point.


An image from Luther's German translation of the New Testament. For Luther, scripture was the true guide to faith

1522

Return to Wittenberg
A rise in religious extremism, notably the arrival of the Zwickau prophets in December 1521, forces Luther to return to Wittenberg. He works to dampen the radicalism of reformers.

1524-25

German Peasants' War
Though rooted in socio-economic discontent, preachers loyal to the rebels appeal to Luther's concept of Christian liberty. The peasants' demands carry echoes of Luther's ideas.

1525

Luther marries
Luther weds Katharina von Bora, a former nun who arrived in Wittenberg in 1523. The couple have six children. The death of a daughter, Magdalena, in 1542 sends Luther into despair.

1530

Augsburg Confession
The codification of Lutheran doctrines and worship, drafted by Melanchthon, is presented to Charles V at Diet of Augsburg, & published the next year.

1531

Formation of Schmalkaldic League
This defensive alliance of Lutheran princes and towns, played a major role in the expansion of Lutheranism. It came into conflict with Charles V.

1546

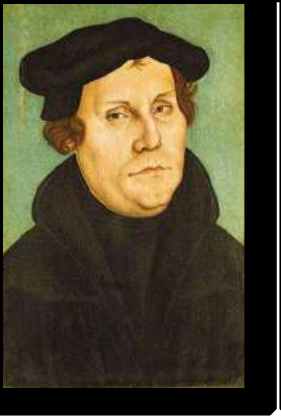
Luther's death
After preaching his final sermon on 14 February, Luther dies in his hometown of Eisleben on the 18th of the month. He is 46 years old and is buried in Wittenberg.

The Protestant Reformation

How a single act of defiance sparked a wildfire of destruction and religious reform that swept through Europe and changed the world forever

MARTIN LUTHER'S DEFIANCE

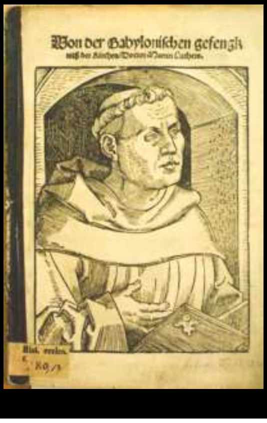
Luther posts his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenberg in protest at some of the Church's practices, including the sale of indulgences as a means of raising money.



1517

A COLLISION COURSE WITH ROME

Luther publishes and circulates a damning pamphlet in which he discusses the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church, as well as openly criticising both the Church and the Pope.



1520

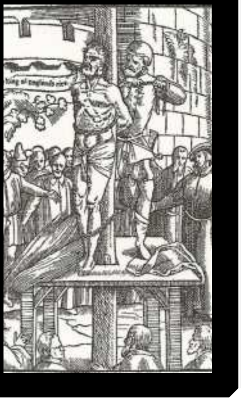
THE ACT OF SUPREMACY

Henry VIII instructs Thomas Cromwell to push through an act to make him Head of the Church in England. All ties with Rome are broken.

1534

THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

Thomas More refuses to accept Henry as Head of the Church and is executed. William Tyndale is found guilty of heresy for his bible translation and burned at the stake.



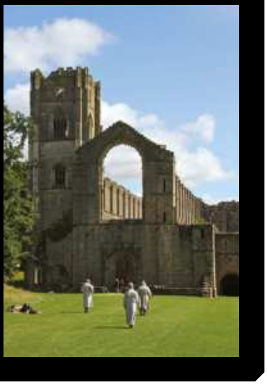
1535-6

DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES

Took **4 YEARS** to complete

A total of about **376** monasteries

For all monasteries with a revenue of less than **£200** per year



1536

JOHN CALVIN

John Calvin publishes his version of reform, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The Catholic Church is now under attack from different factions of reformers with very differing views.

After being tied to a stake, Tyndale was strangled before being burned

1536

THE PEACE OF AUGSBURG

This treaty ends conflict between the Holy Roman Empire and the Schmalkaldic League of Lutheran Princes. Lutheranism is to be tolerated and on track to becoming properly recognised in Europe.

1555

PROTESTANTISM COMES TO SCOTLAND

John Knox, a staunch follower of Calvin, is central to the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. England returns to Protestantism under Elizabeth I following Mary I's Catholic reign.

1559

FRANCE AT WAR WITH ITSELF

The French Religious Wars are actually individual conflicts **EIGHT**

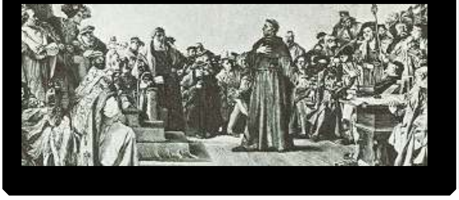
As many as **4,000** Huguenots are executed at one time

By the time the Edict of Nantes ends the conflict nearly **4 MILLION** are dead

1562-1598

THE DIET OF WORMS

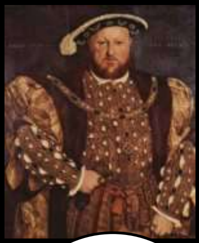
Summoned to answer questions before the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, Luther's actions are deemed unacceptable and he is condemned as a heretic. He is excommunicated by the Pope.



1521

HENRY VIII ATTACKS LUTHER

In answer to Luther's attack on the Church, Henry writes his own pamphlet *Septem Sacramentorum*, defending the Catholic Church. A grateful Pope gives Henry the title 'Defender of the Faith'.



1521 – Frederick the Wise keeps Luther inside Wartburg Castle, hoping this will lower his popularity

1521

A QUESTION OF NUMBERS

Martin Luther challenges the 7 sacraments of the Church

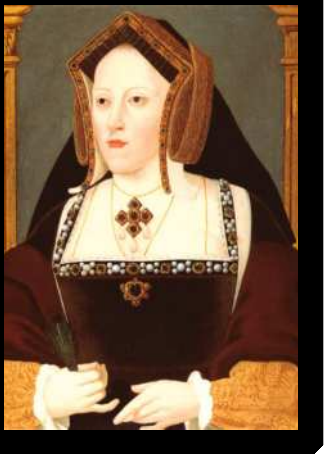
Calvin sets out 5 principles of theology

The Augsburg Confession consists of 28 ARTICLES of Lutheran Doctrine presented to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V

1517-1536

HENRY EXCOMMUNICATED

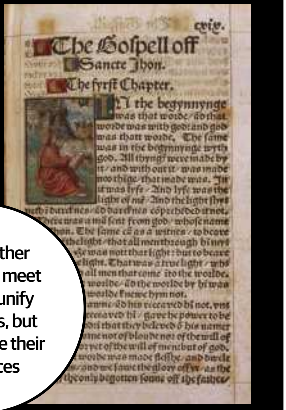
Following his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII begins his own path of action in direct conflict with the Pope. Despite being called a 'Defender of the Faith', he is excommunicated by the Pope.



1533

TYNDALE'S BIBLE PUBLISHED

In direct conflict with the Catholic Church's practice of services in Latin, William Tyndale publishes the first English translation. Those able to read can now question the wording and the Church's authority.



cxix.

The Goſpell off Sancte Jhon.

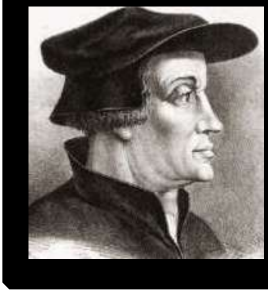
The fyrſt Chapter.

1529 – Luther and Zwingli meet to try and unify Protestants, but cannot agree their differences

1526

ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT IS BORN

Inspired by Luther's dissent, the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli forms the Anabaptists, denouncing the doctrine of baptism in children and advocating for adult baptisms when they are old enough to confess their sins.



1525

THE EDICT OF NANTES

Following the persecution of the Protestant Huguenots, King Henry IV of France grants them religious toleration. It brings civil order but is revoked by Henry's grandson, Louis, in 1685.

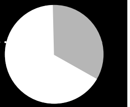
1560 – The Geneva Bible is the first to be mechanically printed and mass-produced

1598

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

The war actually lasts 29 YEARS, 11 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS & 1 DAY

Between 25-40% of the German population are killed



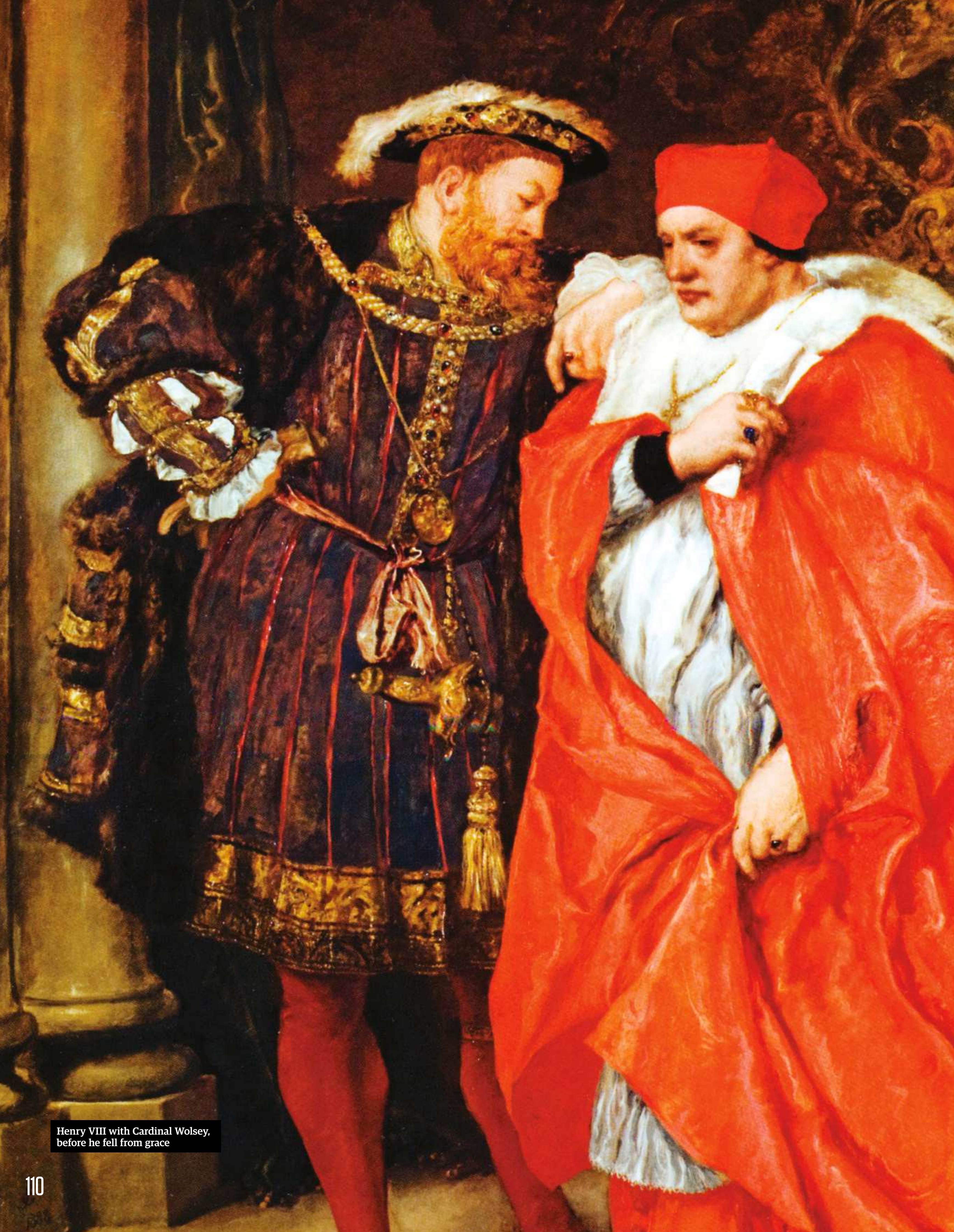
The Holy Roman Empire consists of approximately 1,000 semi-autonomous states

1618-1648

THIRTY YEARS' WAR ENDS

The Treaty of Westphalia ends a destructive conflict between Catholics and Protestants from across Europe – mainly in Germany. It changes the European map and religious tolerance forever.

1648



Henry VIII with Cardinal Wolsey, before he fell from grace

Henry VIII versus the Church

Motivated by greed, love and a thirst for power, King Henry VIII changed the face of religion in England forever

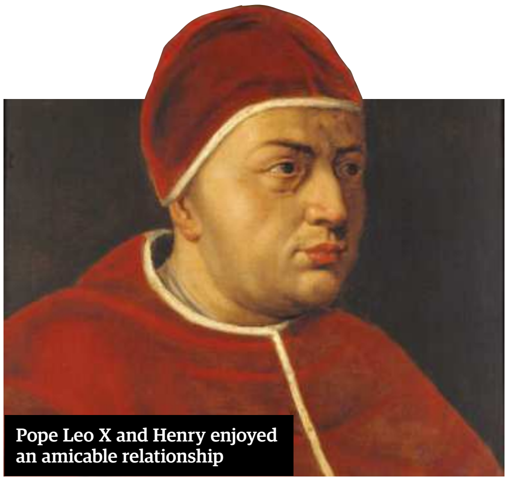
An infamous womaniser and formidable warmonger, Henry VIII was a man accustomed to getting his way. Merciless with his affairs in court, he cut an imposing figure and was feared by many around him. Nothing would stand in the way of him preserving his father's legacy – not even, as history would come to find, the greatest religion in the world at the time.

The Reformation was one of the most revolutionary events ever to take place in English history, and with a stroke, Henry VIII ended 1,000 years of papal control, displaced thousands of religious figures and – eventually – brought religion to the masses for the first time. But like many things in Henry's life, this didn't come easily, and matters of the heart, the royal purse and sovereignty meshed together to make Henry's break with Rome a complicated process.

> "Henry believed his first marriage had been cursed by God"

By the end of the 16th century, monasticism had almost entirely disappeared from other European states, with many adopting Lutheranism or Reformation instead, and those maintaining Catholicism approaching the faith in greatly reduced numbers and in a radically changed form. These changes were prompted by a dissatisfaction with the general state of religious life, regarded by many as too lavish and opulent. Indeed, religious houses in 16th-century England alone were in control of about two-fifths of parish benefices in the country, owned about a quarter of the nation's landed wealth and had no issue with spending half of all ecclesiastical income – which added up to a significant sum.

Kings and princes throughout Europe faced severe financial difficulties because of rising expenditures – armies, fighting ships and fortifications didn't come cheap, after all. Most would, sooner or later, plunder the monastic wealth that was regarded by many as excessive and idle; Protestant kings would justify this by claiming divine authority while Catholic kings would persuade the papacy of their great need for revenue. Of course, Henry and his chief minister Thomas Cromwell were constantly seeking ways to redirect ecclesiastical income to the Crown's coffers, but England's break from Rome – and Catholicism



Pope Leo X and Henry enjoyed an amicable relationship

The Pope's Influence

Henry VIII was a religious man who put a great deal of stock into his Catholic faith – it was, after all, a passage in the Book of Leviticus that convinced him his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was unholy. Up until this point, England's relationship with Rome and the pope, who sat at the very head of the Catholic church, had been largely peaceful. Indeed, religious scriptures referring to the pope as the voice of God were common in English churches, and men of the cloth would give sermons celebrating the divine relationship between the pope and the creator.

Pope Julius II was in command of the church when Henry acceded to the throne in 1509. Four years later, he was followed by Pope Leo X. In 1521, Henry wrote the *Assertio Septem Sacramentorum* (*The Defence Of The Seven Sacraments*) – his answer to the attacks of Lutheranism on many aspects of the Catholic faith, which was seen as excessive and indulgent by many in Europe. In gratitude, Leo X awarded Henry the title 'fidei defensor' (defender of the faith).

Henry and the pope would communicate regularly, by letter or in sending representatives to visit one another, and while there is evidence to suggest Henry felt somewhat oppressed by Rome's constant presence in English religious matters, it wasn't until 1527, when Pope Clement VII was in charge and when Henry first sought a divorce, that the relationship became seriously strained.

> "Henry began to believe that his sonless marriage was a punishment from God for marrying his dead brother's wife"

as it was known at the time – did not come about because of a lack of coinage. Many would argue that the real driving force behind the split was love.

Catherine of Aragon – Henry VIII's cursed first wife – was originally married to Henry's elder brother, Arthur. But after Arthur died of the sweating sickness in 1502, it was decided – apparently in a bid to avoid the repayment of her dowry – that she would marry Henry. Somewhat ironically, this union depended on the pope granting a special dispensation, because canon law forbade men to marry their brother's widow, but Catherine testified that her marriage to Arthur was never consummated, and therefore in the eyes of the church was invalid. The marriage between Henry and Catherine took place in June 1509, seven years after Prince Arthur's death and just days after Henry VIII had acceded to the throne.

But by 1527, the couple had been married for 18 years and had only one surviving child to show for it: Mary. Five other children – three of them boys – had been born, each surviving only a matter of days. The gaps between each birth, often just over a year, show how desperately a son and heir was wanted, particularly as Henry had been involved in a riding accident that nearly killed him. He needed to secure a successor, and as no queens had been allowed up to this point in history, a daughter simply would not do. But at the age of 40, Catherine was past childbearing age.

Henry began to believe that his sonless marriage was a punishment from God for marrying his dead brother's wife. According to the Book of Leviticus, "If a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: they shall be childless." While not technically childless, his only surviving daughter was of no interest to Henry.

> After marrying Anne Boleyn in secret, Henry needed to move quickly to guarantee the legitimacy of their unborn child

By this point, Henry was already infatuated with Anne Boleyn, Catherine's maid of honour, but his advances had been refused, with the 19-year-old telling the great king she would only surrender her virginity to the man she married. Henry – a man used to getting his way – was of course stunned, but such was his obsession with her that he consulted his advisers about the possibility of a divorce from Catherine. With Anne as his wife, he reasoned, he would appease God and secure an heir to the Tudor dynasty – and of course fulfil his personal desires.

Divorce was virtually unheard of during this period, so Henry sent Cardinal Thomas Wolsey – his chief adviser – to speak to Pope Clement VII to secure an annulment of the marriage on the grounds that it was against the laws of the church, and that the pope shouldn't have issued a dispensation for the union in the first place. But the dynamics of the meeting were complicated: the pope was, at the time, a prisoner of Charles V, Catherine of Aragon's nephew, and Wolsey was keen to avoid undue tension as he had designs on becoming pope himself one day. Pope Clement VII, not wishing to offend either monarch, played for time by sending a representative back to England to hold a trial to examine the evidence and find a solution. He hoped that during the delay the situation would change, that Henry might change his mind, or that Catherine might become pregnant, or even die.

The trial took two years, during which time Henry became ever more frustrated. He asked Catherine to co-operate, offering her a pick of houses to retire to until the matter was resolved and encouraging her to choose to move to a convent, which would leave him free to remarry. But even after Henry separated Catherine from

Timeline

1527

Henry wants a divorce
Henry becomes obsessed with a passage in Leviticus that suggests the reason he does not have a son is because he had married his brother's wife. He decides that he has to divorce Catherine.
Spring 1527

Rome is involved
An ecclesiastical court meets several times to discuss the validity of Henry's marriage, but they're unable to reach any clear conclusion and refer the case to Rome. Pope Clement VII hesitates over a final decision.
May 1527

The Pope makes his stance clear
The pope issues a brief that says Henry is not free to remarry and that if he did so without the permission of Rome, any children would be considered illegitimate.
January 1531

Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates
In a bid to put further pressure on the pope to grant his divorce, Henry personally oversees the Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates, which severely limits the amount of money English churches send to Rome.
March 1532

Mary, her only child, she made it quite clear that she would resist any divorce.

Poor Catherine could never have known that her refusal to accept the annulment and her appeal to Rome for the pope's support would lead to England breaking with her beloved church, and in the days before she died in 1536, she was consumed with worry that she was to blame for the 'heresies' and 'scandals' that England subsequently suffered from.

The trial eventually ended without an annulment. Henry was furious, blamed Wolsey for failing to get the result he wanted, and summoned him to London to answer charges of treason. Wolsey died en route, before he had the chance to face the king's wrath.

Thomas Cromwell, lawyer and First Earl of Essex, was quick to take Wolsey's place. Arguably one of the strongest and most powerful advocates of Reformation, it was Cromwell who masterminded the events that would eventually lead to England's break with Rome, while Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury at the time, was the first person to plant the idea of total power in Henry's mind: as king of the country and head of the Church of England, Henry would answer to no one.

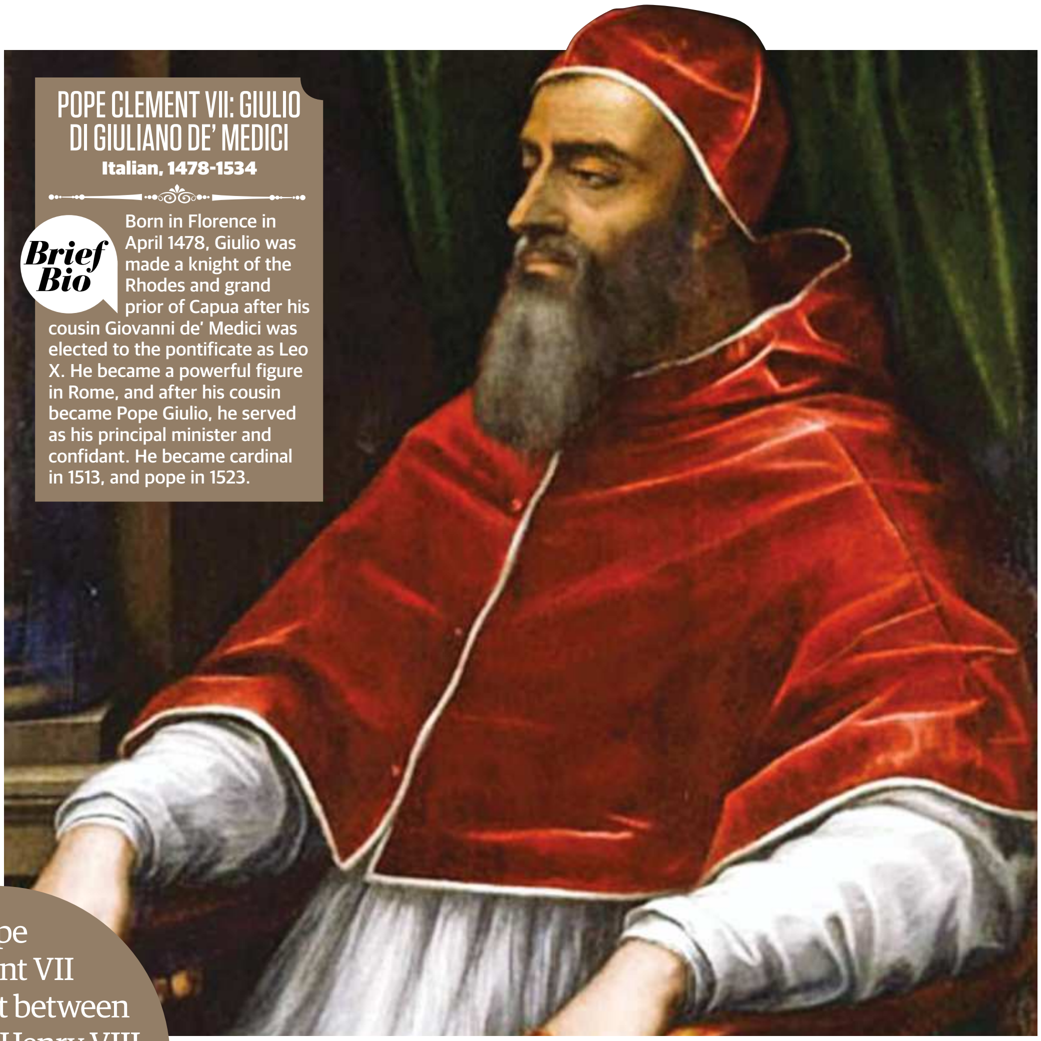
The king sought advice from the universities of Europe. Of course, many within these institutions were opposed to the divorce, so it is no coincidence that the king's advisers were choosy about the scholars they picked to make a decision. It is also no coincidence that those siding with Henry's case were sent a significant sum of money. The careful 'management' of the scholars paid off, and both Cambridge and Oxford University declared it was against divine law for a man to marry his brother's widow. Cranmer then visited the pope to try again for an annulment. But again - and despite the scholars' conclusion - it was refused. In fact, the pope subsequently issued a brief that ordered Henry to separate from Anne, driving home the point that Henry was not free to remarry, and if he did so without the permission of Rome, any children that were born to the couple would be considered illegitimate.

Pope Clement VII was caught between the wills of Henry VIII and Charles V, so he postponed a decision for as long as possible

Of course, this did nothing but inflame Henry's already-infamous temper, and in an act of fury, Henry issued the Act in Conditional Restraint of Annates, which limited payments by any English church to Rome to just 5 per cent of its net revenue. Henry personally oversaw the passing of the bill in the House of Commons, and in an unprecedented move asked all those who supported the bill to sit on one side of the House and those who opposed it on the other - an intimidating measure that saw the act passed without quarrel, and made Henry clearly aware of his opponents.

But again, this failed to have the desired effect on the pope - who had been told repeatedly by Charles V that he would be extremely angry if a divorce was granted. Things were becoming more pressing for Henry now, as by early 1533 Anne revealed that she was pregnant. Henry had to move quickly to ensure the legitimacy of their child, and so the pair wed in a secret ceremony in the king's private chapel in Whitehall.

Sensing opposition to the union - after all, Catherine of Aragon was well liked by the English people - Henry exerted his influence further with



POPE CLEMENT VII: GIULIO DI GIULIANO DE' MEDICI

Italian, 1478-1534

Brief Bio

Born in Florence in April 1478, Giulio was made a knight of the Rhodes and grand prior of Capua after his cousin Giovanni de' Medici was elected to the pontificate as Leo X. He became a powerful figure in Rome, and after his cousin became Pope Giulio, he served as his principal minister and confidant. He became cardinal in 1513, and pope in 1523.

Act in Restraint of Appeals
This act makes it against the law for anyone to make an appeal of any sort to Rome. Spiritual and secular jurisdiction is to be the ultimate responsibility of the king, and the pope is now made essentially powerless throughout England.
April 1533

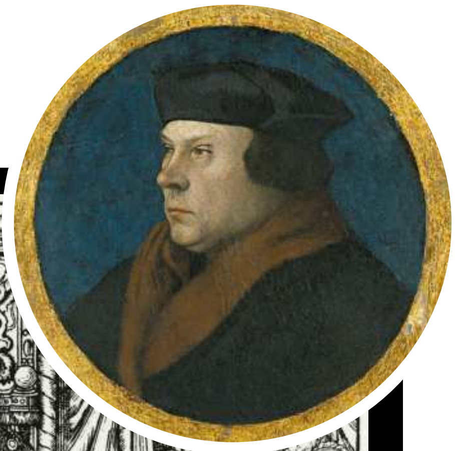
Henry gets his divorce
In a hearing at Lambeth Palace, Thomas Cranmer proclaims that Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn - who is now pregnant - is legal. Later, the Act of Succession will ensure that Mary, Henry's daughter from his first marriage, is no longer heir to the throne.
May 1533

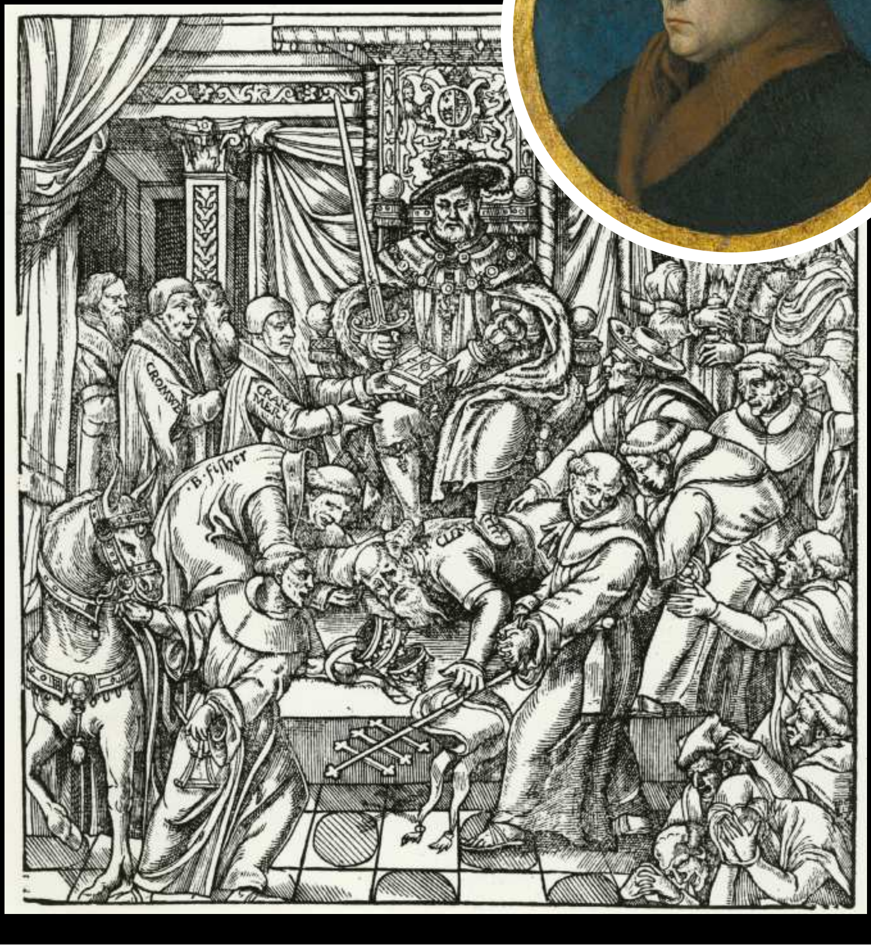
1534

The Act of Supremacy
This historical act declares England to be a sovereign state with the king as head of both the country and the church. Henry has more power than ever before, and the subsequent treason act means no one, on pain of death, is allowed to question it.
November 1534

Cromwell versus Rome

The lawyer played a pivotal role in the break from Rome, but was he a political mastermind or a royal puppet?





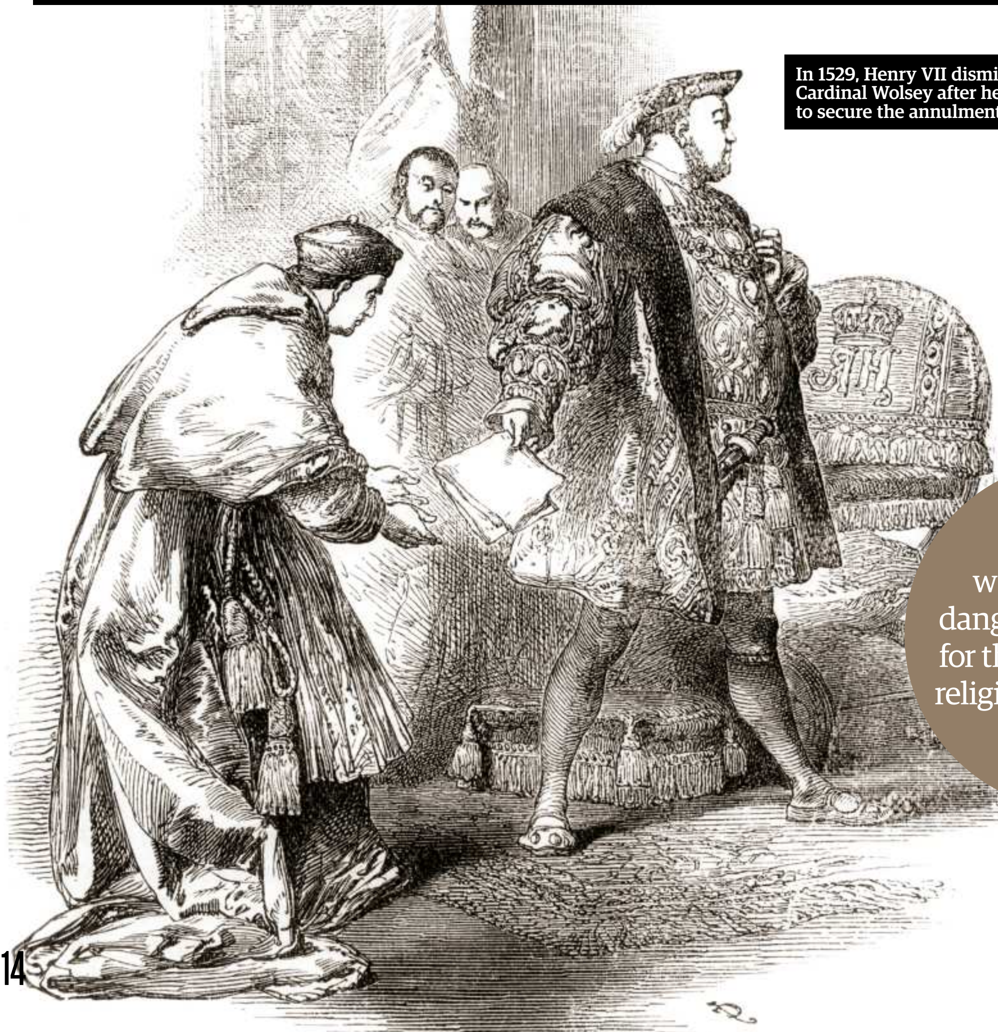
Thomas Cromwell was a self-made man of humble beginnings, the son of a blacksmith and cloth merchant, but he quickly became a well-respected lawyer. By 1523, he'd obtained a seat in the House of Commons and by 1531 he had taken control of the king's legal and parliamentary affairs.

It's not clear whether Cromwell was driven by personal ambition or a deeply rooted belief in his cause – although it is known he wasn't fond of flattery – but he was hugely enamoured with the idea of total and ultimate control for his king. He manipulated the Commons by resurrecting anti-clerical grievances expressed in earlier parliamentary sessions, which led to the Commons denouncing clerical abuses and the power of ecclesiastical courts, ultimately describing Henry as "the only head, sovereign lord, protector and defender" of the church.

Cromwell went on to oversee the passing of the Act in Restraint of Appeals, and was authorised by Henry – perhaps after some gentle nudging by Cromwell – to discredit the papacy and the pope throughout the nation.

Come 1534, Cromwell had risen to the position of principal secretary and chief minister, and had strengthened his own control over the church, having been appointed Royal Vicegerent and Vicar-General by the king.

There can be little question as to the importance of Cromwell's role in the break from Rome – it was largely thanks to his intellect and persuasiveness that legislative events unfolded the way they did. Whether it was he or Henry ultimately holding the reins, however, is unclear. Certainly, he was a trusted and well-rewarded servant of the king, but that wasn't enough to save him in 1540, when the King's marriage to Anne of Cleves – engineered by Cromwell – went awry, and he was arrested on various questionable counts of treason, and executed.



In 1529, Henry VII dismissed Cardinal Wolsey after he failed to secure the annulment

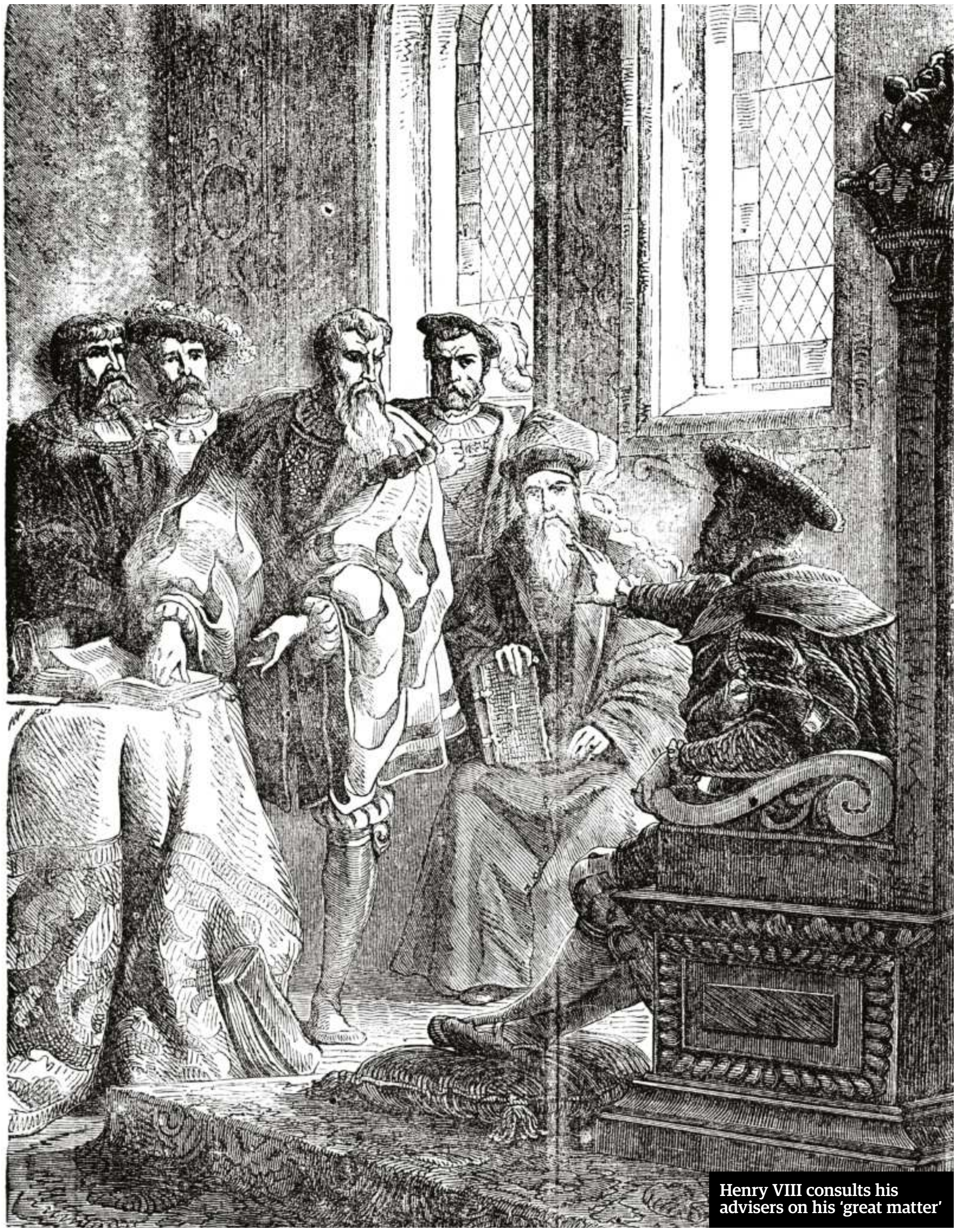
the Act in Restraint of Appeals. This brought church courts under the control of Henry, and made it illegal for anyone to appeal to the pope. This meant that, as the newly appointed archbishop of Canterbury and under Henry's ruling, Thomas Cranmer could grant the much-needed divorce, and nobody could appeal to a higher power - Rome - in protest.

Historians debate whether Henry ever intended things to go this far; after all, if a divorce had been granted from the outset, there would be no need for these laws. But by now Henry had committed to a course of action, and the legacy of the Tudor name depended on him seeing it through.

Unfortunately for Henry, though, Anne gave birth to a girl: Elizabeth. This was both disappointing and embarrassing: Henry had all but moved heaven and earth to protect the status of his unborn child, but another girl meant that the Tudor legacy was no closer to protection. His relationship with Anne suffered, and once again Henry became transfixed on the idea that he was being punished by God.

Still, he was perhaps hopeful that he would get his much-wanted son and heir, and so Henry pushed on. In December 1533, an order was

The break with Rome set a dangerous precedent for the governance of religion in England in the future



Henry VIII consults his advisers on his 'great matter'

After dissolution, the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey were stripped of lead and stones

"Anyone who wrote or spoke any criticism of Henry in his dealings with the pope was guilty of treason"

issued that said the pope had no more authority in England than any other bishop; from now on he'd simply be known as the Bishop of Rome. To be sure that his subjects recognised royal supremacy over papal supremacy, Henry ordered parish priests to erase all references to the pope from prayer books and to leave their parishioners in no doubt that the king, and only the king, was head of the church.

This was fortified by the Act of Succession, which declared Henry and Catherine's marriage illegal and supported Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn. The act also restricted the succession to the children of this new marriage: Princess Mary Tudor was no longer heir to the throne.

The Act of Supremacy - the death knell for England's religious relationship with Rome - was passed in 1534. This effectively declared England a sovereign state and the king head of both country and church. The act gave Henry the power to visit, redress, reform, correct and amend all errors and perceived heresies previously dealt with by another spiritual authority - the pope.

Dissolved monasteries

Glastonbury Abbey

One of the worst hit monasteries during the dissolution, in September 1539 Glastonbury Abbey was stripped of its valuables, including a large amount of silver and gold. Abbot Richard Whiting, who'd supported Henry's Act of Supremacy but resisted the dissolution, was hanged, drawn and quartered as a traitor on Glastonbury Tor.

St John's Abbey, Colchester

Thanks to the intervention of Thomas Audley, lord chancellor at the time, St John's Abbey had survived initial dissolutions. But after being raided for valuables, it was dissolved in 1539. The Abbey's last abbot, John Beche, refused to surrender the abbey to the king and was eventually found guilty of treason. He was then hanged.

Leicester Abbey

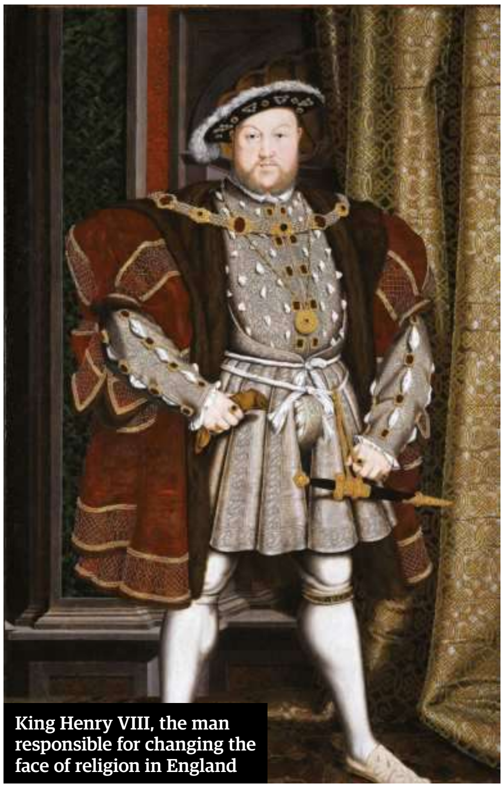
The abbot of Leicester Abbey, John Bourchier, tried to protect his canons and abbey by sending Thomas Cromwell - the man overseeing the inspection of monasteries - lavish gifts, including £100, sheep and oxen. Unfortunately, his bribery didn't work, and the abbey was surrendered in 1538.

Reading Abbey

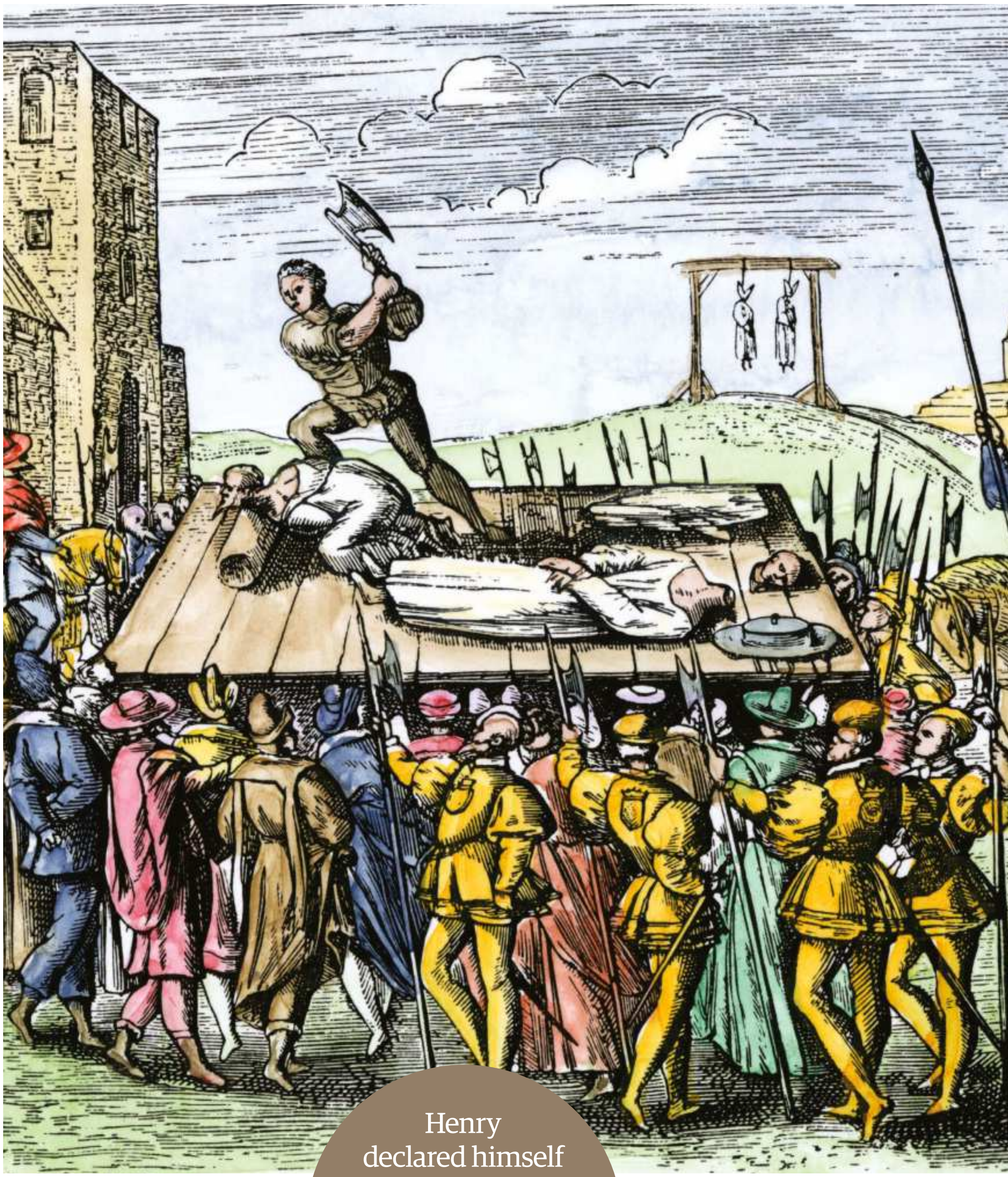
Reading Abbey was all but destroyed during the dissolution, with valuables taken from the building. After the last abbot, Hugh Cook Faringdon, was hanged, drawn and quartered for treason, the buildings of the abbey were extensively looted, with lead and glass stolen for use elsewhere.

Syon Abbey

After one of its monks, Richard Reynolds, went to great lengths to deny Henry's supremacy over the English Church, Syon Abbey became the focus of particular vengeance for Henry. After the monastery finally surrendered to the king in 1539, the abbey was dissolved, and Richard Reynolds was hanged, drawn and quartered for treason.



King Henry VIII, the man responsible for changing the face of religion in England



The Reformation Parliament

The Reformation Parliament was so called because it was the English parliament that passed and enabled all the major pieces of legislation that led to the English reformation under Henry VIII.

This Parliament sat from 1529 to 1536 and was tasked with dealing with Henry's divorce from Catherine: his 'great matter'. But in a few short years Parliament made laws affecting all aspects of national life, and with the ground-breaking statutes of the 1530s, the Reformation Parliament became all powerful. No area of governance was outside its authority – apart from Henry's will, that was.

Parliament existed simply because Henry decided it could, but the king knew that the best way to exercise his will was with the backing of Parliament in statute. As he himself told the Commons: "We be informed by our judges that we at no time stand so highly in our estate royal as in the time of Parliament."

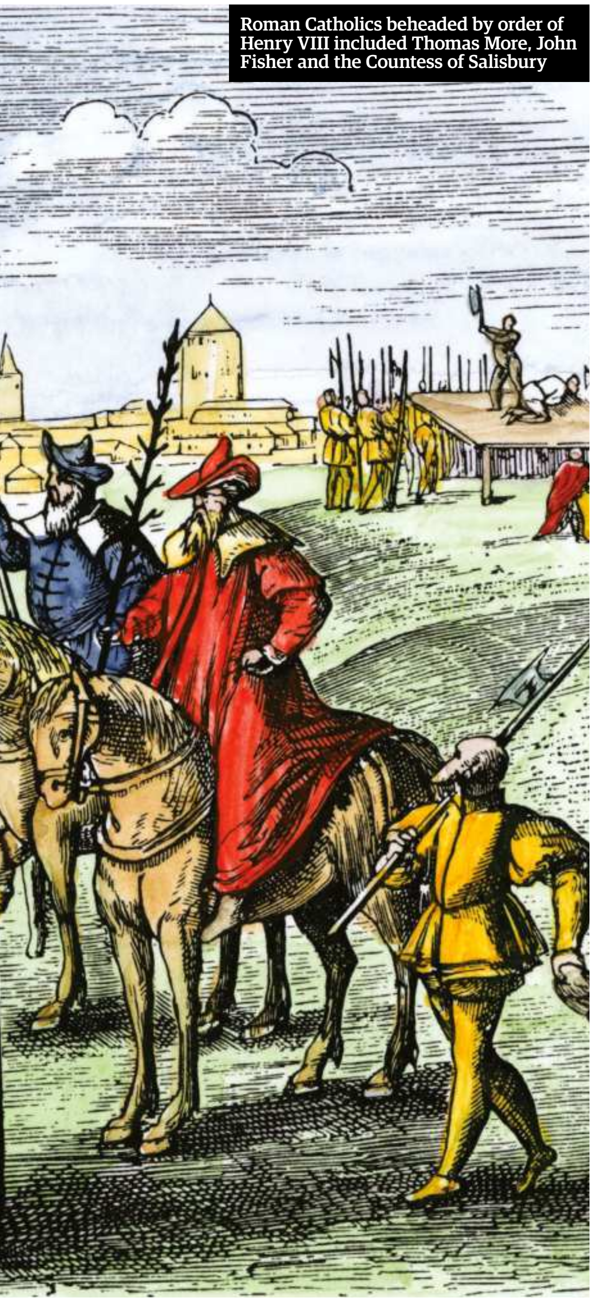
Parliament was integral to Henry's break with Rome, not only because it helped to pass important legislation, but because it was pivotal in identifying areas of criticism, such as the greed and vices of the church, which helped convince many that the split was needed.

Henry was no doubt somewhat manipulative of Parliament in order to achieve his aims, but his successors each equally used parliament to pass their own legislation, changing the landscape of both politics and religion in England forever.

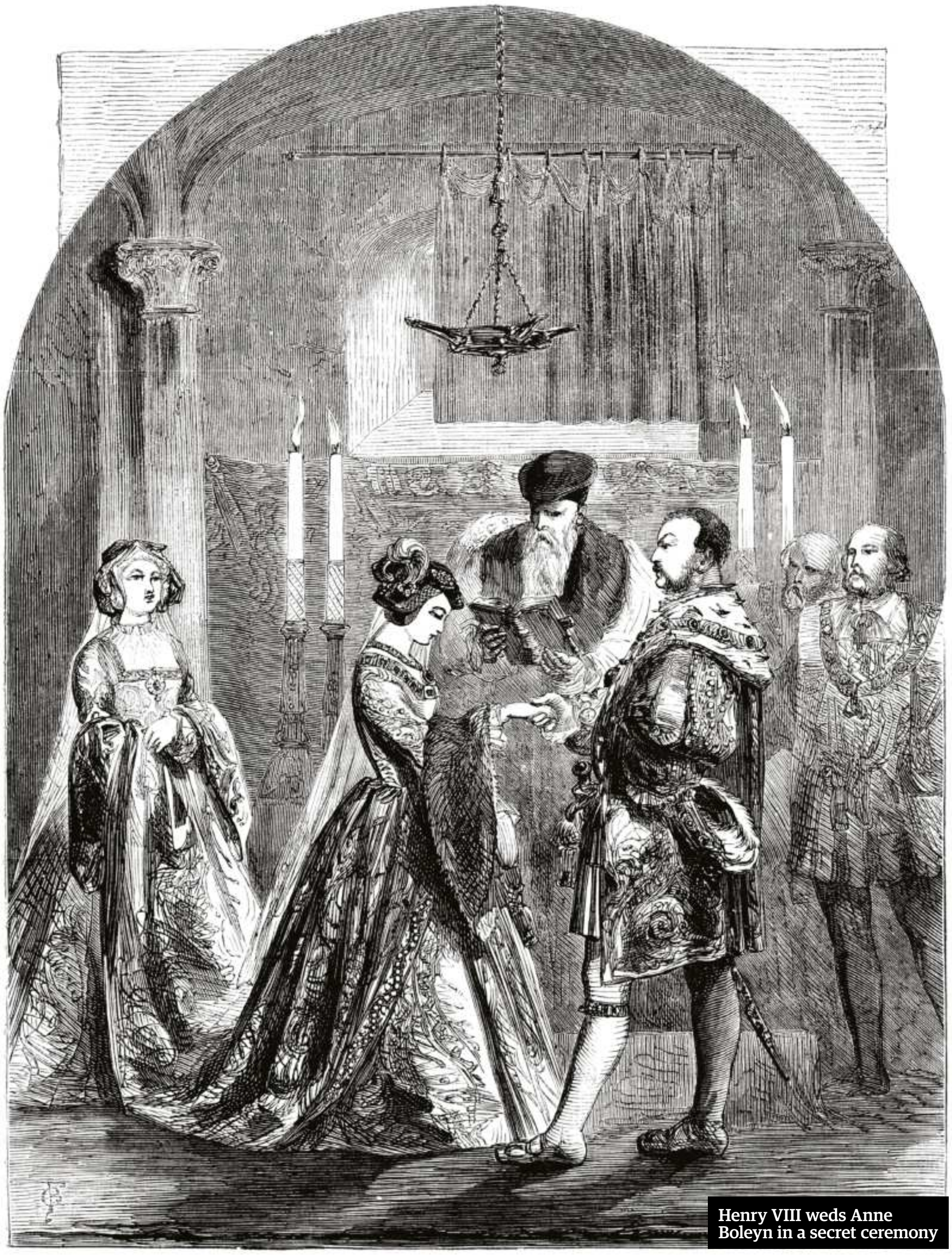
Henry declared himself the head of the Church, and threatened his opponents with death

All taxes that were formerly paid to Rome would now only be paid to the king, who could now define the faith in parliament and appoint any men he wanted to the most important ecclesiastical posts. The passing of this act gave Henry more power than ever, and a Treason Act swiftly followed, which said that anyone who wrote or spoke any criticism of Henry in his dealings with the pope was guilty of treason and would be dealt with severely. Conveniently, Charles V was occupied elsewhere fighting the French, and was unable to intervene.

Of course, Henry couldn't simply have all of his naysayers killed, so he had to make the move from Rome look like an overall package of reform. Indeed, the entire process had happened so slowly that most common people had little issue with the change – King Henry had always been seen as top dog anyway. However, most did take umbrage with the idea of divorce and the way that Catherine and Mary had been treated. But this was balanced against the popular opinion of the church, which had been seen as excessively wealthy and greedy, and the pope a foreigner only interested in raising taxes. So at this stage, the majority sided with Henry, and willingly took the Oath of Supremacy that he subsequently demanded of all of his subjects. Those that didn't – a great number of monks, for example – were arrested and publicly hanged, drawn and quartered, which evidently served to 'encourage' support from his opponents.



Roman Catholics beheaded by order of Henry VIII included Thomas More, John Fisher and the Countess of Salisbury



Henry VIII weds Anne Boleyn in a secret ceremony

At this point, despite the enormous changes to the governance of the church, religion itself in England remained unchanged. However, the developments created a dangerous precedent for England going forward. By 1536, Henry had lost interest in Anne – who had failed to provide him with a son – and who was subsequently charged with treason and adultery, and executed.

Henry then married Jane Seymour, and thanks to the Act of Succession was able to effectively 'strike from the record' his previous marriages, giving Elizabeth the same status as Mary: 'lady', not 'princess'. But the general public had greater concerns. In a bid to boost the king's coffers, Cromwell led the dissolution of the monasteries, which saw monastic land sold off and the buildings stripped bare of anything of value, including the lead off the roofs. The Act of 10 Articles in 1536 made the English church more Protestant, with just three sacraments recognised – baptism, penance and the Eucharist. Other sacraments, including marriage and the last rites, were no longer regarded as holy, and pilgrimages and the display of relics were also banned. But later, in 1539, the Act of Six Articles undid much of this Protestant focus and reintroduced many Catholic beliefs.

It was a tumultuous time for religion in England, with the church-going masses pulled from pillar to post in keeping abreast of the changes – failure to comply carried harsh penalties, after all. This evolution of religion carried on long after Henry's death, too, as Mary and Elizabeth later jostled for power, each with their own religious beliefs that they wanted to instil across the land.

Henry's motives for breaking with Rome were, initially at least, far removed from religion, but the Great King, and his temper, impatience and lusty ways, set in motion a process that would change the face of religion – and indeed politics – in England forever.

"The entire process had happened so slowly that most common people had little issue with the change"

© Alamy

Enduring elegance: the King James Bible

The King James Bible, conceived as both a religious and political tool, survives as an iconic translation of the Scriptures into the English language

"I defy the Pope and all his laws, and if God spare my life, ere many years, I will cause the boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scriptures than thou dost!" railed William Tyndale in a stinging retort to a clergyman's warning that many of his opinions were contrary to the position of the church.

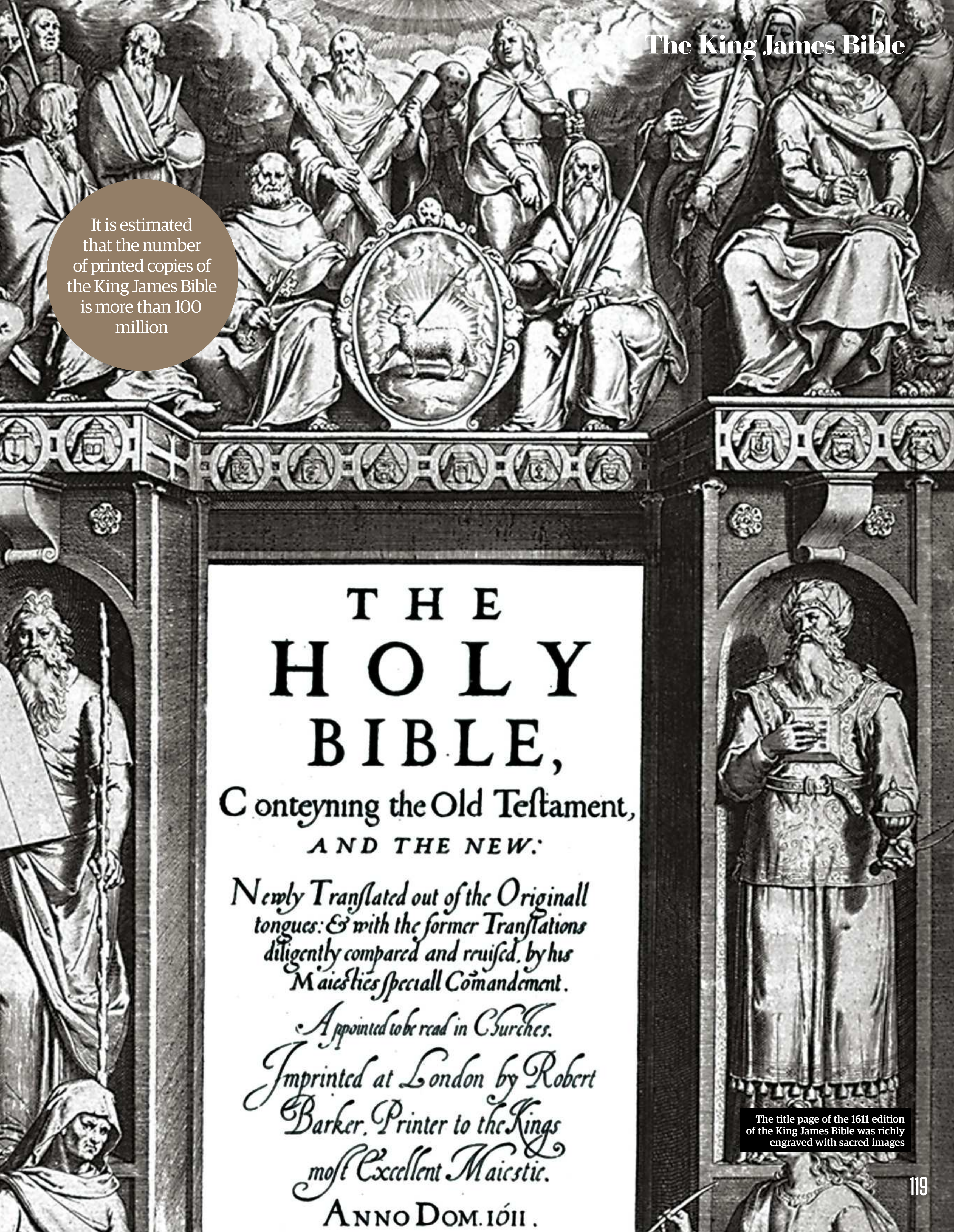
After fleeing England in 1524, Tyndale completed the first translation of the New Testament into English directly from Hebrew and Greek texts rather than Latin. As it was distributed, church leaders suppressed the translation since it threatened their control of access to the Scriptures and might undermine their authority if the common Englishman could read the Bible for himself. Tyndale was strangled and his lifeless body burned at the stake in Vilvoorde, Belgium, in 1536. His last words were reportedly, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes!"

For decades, simple possession of Tyndale's historic work might have meant a death sentence in England, but by the early 17th century the situation had changed. The Bishops' Bible, an English translation commissioned under the authority of the Church of England in 1568, was the official text in use by its bishops and clergy at that time. The Geneva Bible, produced in complete form in 1560, was the primary text of European Protestantism and the most popular contemporary translation in England. The Great Bible, the first authorised English translation of the Bible, dating to the 1530s, was also in circulation.

Approximately 100,000 changes have been made to the original text of the King James Bible

Tyndale's translation is significant for another reason. Its accuracy since it was translated from original Greek and Hebrew, along with its eloquence and sheer linguistic beauty, gained it lasting popularity. The work that cost Tyndale his life also became the foundation for much of the King James Bible. Scholars estimate that as much as 90 per cent of the King James Version's New Testament is based on Tyndale's translation.

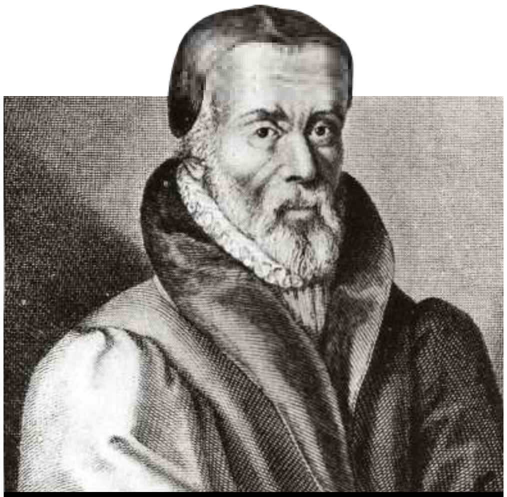
Upon the death of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603, King James VI of Scotland also became King James I of England. The church was already in the throes of the Protestant Reformation. The Church of England, administered by an elite cadre of bishops and clergy, wielded tremendous power. The Puritans sought to fully implement principles of the Reformation and to distance the already separate church from the influence of the pope in Rome. The Catholics were loyal to the Holy



THE
HOLY
BIBLE,
Conteyning the Old Teſtament,
AND THE NEW:
Newly Tranſlated out of the Originall
tongues: & with the former Tranſlations
diligently compared and reuiſed, by his
Maiesties ſpeciall Cōmandement.
Appointed to be read in Churches.
Imprinted at London by Robert
Barker, Printer to the Kings
moſt Excellent Maiestie.
ANNO DOM. 1611.

It is estimated that the number of printed copies of the King James Bible is more than 100 million

The title page of the 1611 edition of the King James Bible was richly engraved with sacred images

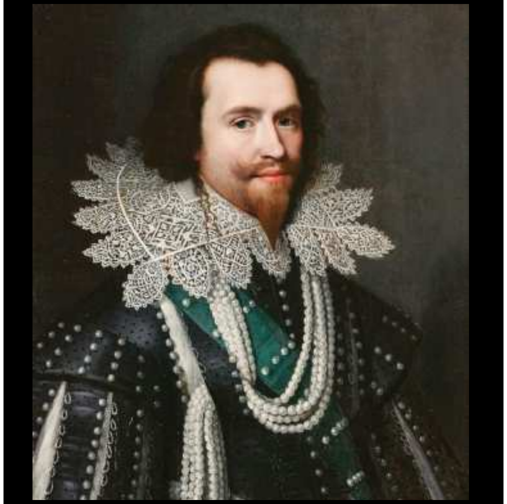


William Tyndale completed a landmark translation of the New Testament in 1625 and was later executed

A closeted monarch?

While King James I is remembered as a pious man, he is also known to have carried on homosexual relationships. The king must have found a rationalisation in order to have come to terms with his sexual orientation and awareness that it was considered by many to be incompatible with Christian teaching. As early as the age of 13, James exhibited open affection for Esmé Stewart, 1st Duke of Lennox. King James also had a relationship with Robert Carr, 1st Earl of Somerset, who blackmailed him with the threat of revealing that they had been homosexual lovers.

Perhaps King James's most ardent homosexual affair was carried on with George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham. The king compared his love for Buckingham with Jesus's love of His disciple John. "I, James, am neither a god nor an angel, but a man like any other," the king wrote. "Therefore I act like a man and confess to loving those dear to me more than other men. You may be sure that I love the Earl of Buckingham more than anyone else… I wish to speak in my own behalf and not to have it thought to be a defect, for Jesus Christ did the same, and therefore I cannot be blamed. Christ had John, and I have George."



George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham, was at the side of King James I when the monarch died

See and wished for a complete return to the fold of the original church. The Presbyterians were particularly interested in eliminating the hierarchy of bishops and advocated its replacement with lay officials such as elders or presbyters.

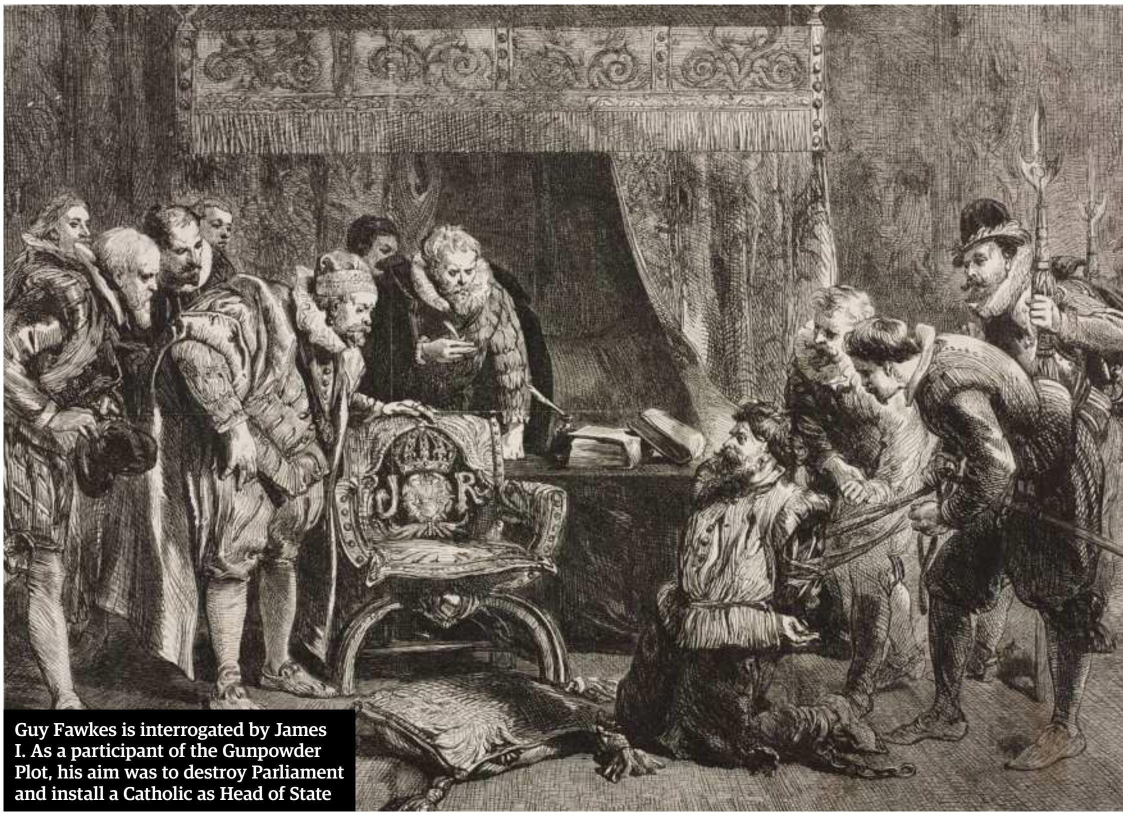
Although many Presbyterians and Puritans believed that the Scottish King James would support their initiatives, they were mistaken. James was a firm believer in the Divine Right of Kings, the premise that kings inherited their right to rule directly from God. Any movement that might weaken the position of the bishops and the Church of England might eventually threaten his own security and had to be silenced. Still, the king realised that in order to maintain the peace he would be compelled to recognise the influence of the Puritans and Presbyterians. At the same time, those holding influential positions within the Church of England had a tremendous stake in retaining the status quo. In time, these sharp divisions within the Christian community contributed to the outbreak of the English Civil War.

However, in April 1603, as James journeyed from Edinburgh to London for his coronation, both peril and opportunity awaited. On the road southward, James and his entourage were met by a delegation of Puritans, who had wasted no time in marshalling their intellectual forces. They presented the new king with a document that has come to be known as the Millenary Petition. With more than 1,000 signatures of Puritan clergymen and leaders, the petition asked James for freedom from the rigid rights of the established church, its trappings, and its elitist hierarchy. The signatures represented roughly ten per cent of the English clergy, and the document could not be ignored.

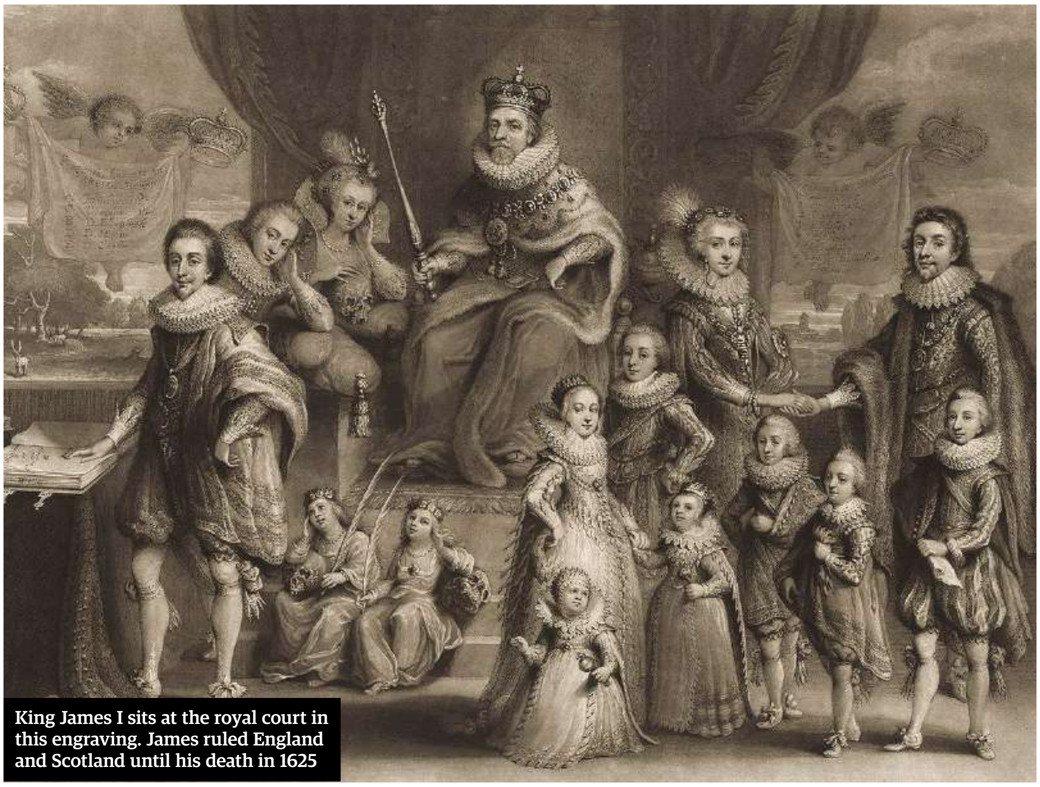
In October 1603, James issued a royal proclamation calling for a conference at Hampton Court Palace on the outskirts of London "for the hearing, and for the determining, things pretended to be amiss with the church." The king's language is telling. Apparently, he did not anticipate changes that would favour the Puritans or Presbyterians to emerge from the conference. Perhaps the great meeting was intended only as an accommodation, to present an allusion of concern for the petitioners. Nevertheless, an agreement of monumental

The 1611 King James Bible was physically chained to the pulpit of churches across England

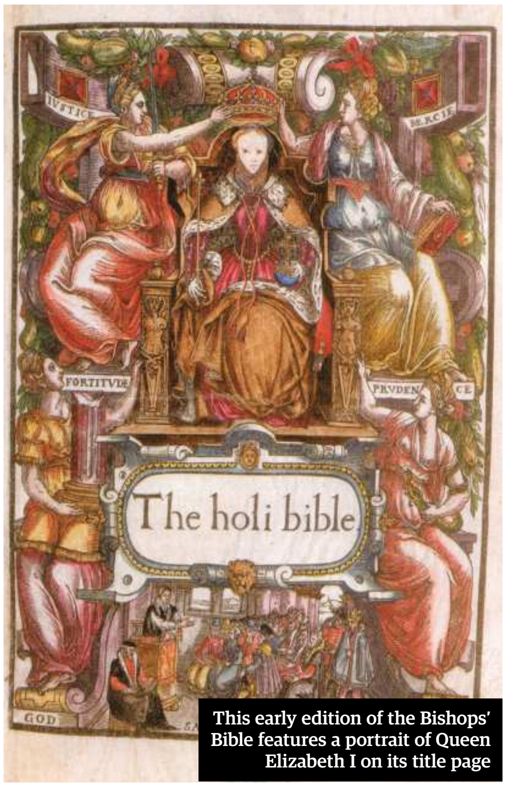
"Rainolds wriggled out of immediate hot water with his suggestion for a new translation of the Bible into English"



Guy Fawkes is interrogated by James I. As a participant of the Gunpowder Plot, his aim was to destroy Parliament and install a Catholic as Head of State



King James I sits at the royal court in this engraving. James ruled England and Scotland until his death in 1625



This early edition of the Bishops' Bible features a portrait of Queen Elizabeth I on its title page

importance that was not even originally a topic for discussion forcefully emerged.

Although there was much that divided them, King James and John Rainolds, the Puritan president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, did find common ground when the latter proposed to undertake a new translation of the Bible. James despised the Geneva Bible, which was replete with marginal notes and annotations that were blatant indictments of the privileged hierarchy of the Church of England. In fact, he once stated that it contained annotations that were "very partial, untrue, seditious, and savouring too much of dangerous and seditious conceits." In fairness, the Catholics were riled by the marginal notes as well, some of which even referred to the pope as the Antichrist.

In some 1611 King James editions, an error in the Book of Ruth used the pronoun 'he' rather than 'she'

Interestingly, the Puritans had been barred from the first day of the conference. When they were allowed to enter on the second day, Rainolds spoke for the Puritan delegation. The immediate uproar nearly caused the conference to implode. Rainolds addressed the king, "Why shouldn't the bishops govern jointly with a presbyterie of their brethren, the pastors and ministers of the church?"

His poor choice of the word 'presbyterie' brought the wrath of the king down swiftly. "If you aim at a Scots Presbyterie, it agreeth as well with monarchy as God and the Devil! Then Jack, and Tom, and Will, and Dick shall meet and censure me and my council… No bishop, no King! If this be all your party hath to say, I will make them conform themselves, or else I will harrie them out of the land, or else do worse!"

Rainolds managed to wriggle out of immediate hot water with the king thanks to his suggestion for a new translation of the Bible into English. On 17 January 1604, a resolution was approved "… that the translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek; and this to be set out and printed, without any marginal notes." James I would have his politically palatable Bible free of any extraneous Puritan-inspired commentary.

Rainolds had made his proposal in the vain hope that James would turn at least somewhat away from the Bishops' Bible, but the king was clear that the new translation was to be based on this preferred text. Since Rainolds had made the suggestion, he was given charge of the project. For the next seven years, as many as 50 scholars laboured in the spectacular undertaking. Numerous Biblical translations were consulted, among them the Tyndale New Testament, the Geneva Bible, the Great Bible, the Bishops' Bible, the Coverdale Bible, the Roman Catholic Rheims New Testament, and others.

Rainolds returned to Oxford and began work with other churchmen on a translation involving the prophets. Five other committees worked on remaining sections of the new Bible, painstakingly pondering virtually every word to determine the optimal translation into English. The preliminary texts were then forwarded to colleagues for review and discussion. Sadly, Rainolds did not live to see the completion of the work he had undertaken. He died of tuberculosis in 1607. Still, he gained a measure of his original intent as, along with the Tyndale New Testament, much of the King James Bible is based on the Geneva Bible despite the warning of James I.

From 1605 to 1606, research was conducted. Then, from 1607 to 1609 the various committees assembled their completed portions. Printing began in 1610, and the following year the first of the large pulpit editions, known as the 1611 King James Bible, were introduced. Decades passed before the new translation became as popular as the Geneva Bible and even supplanted it among the people.

Although the King James Bible was commissioned as a bulwark against the Puritan/Protestant Geneva Bible, many modern Protestant churches proclaim the King James as the only valid English translation of the Scriptures. The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church were zealous in their persecution of Protestants during the 16th century, and when Protestants began to flee to the New World to find religious freedom they brought the Geneva Bible – not the King James – with them.

Still, the King James translation is a work of tremendous scholarship and profound literary quality. It remains the most printed book in history, and while other versions of the Bible have been produced since, it can rightly be said that the King James remained the preferred text for at least 250 years, perhaps only really rivalled by the growing acceptance of the New International Version that emerged in the 20th century.

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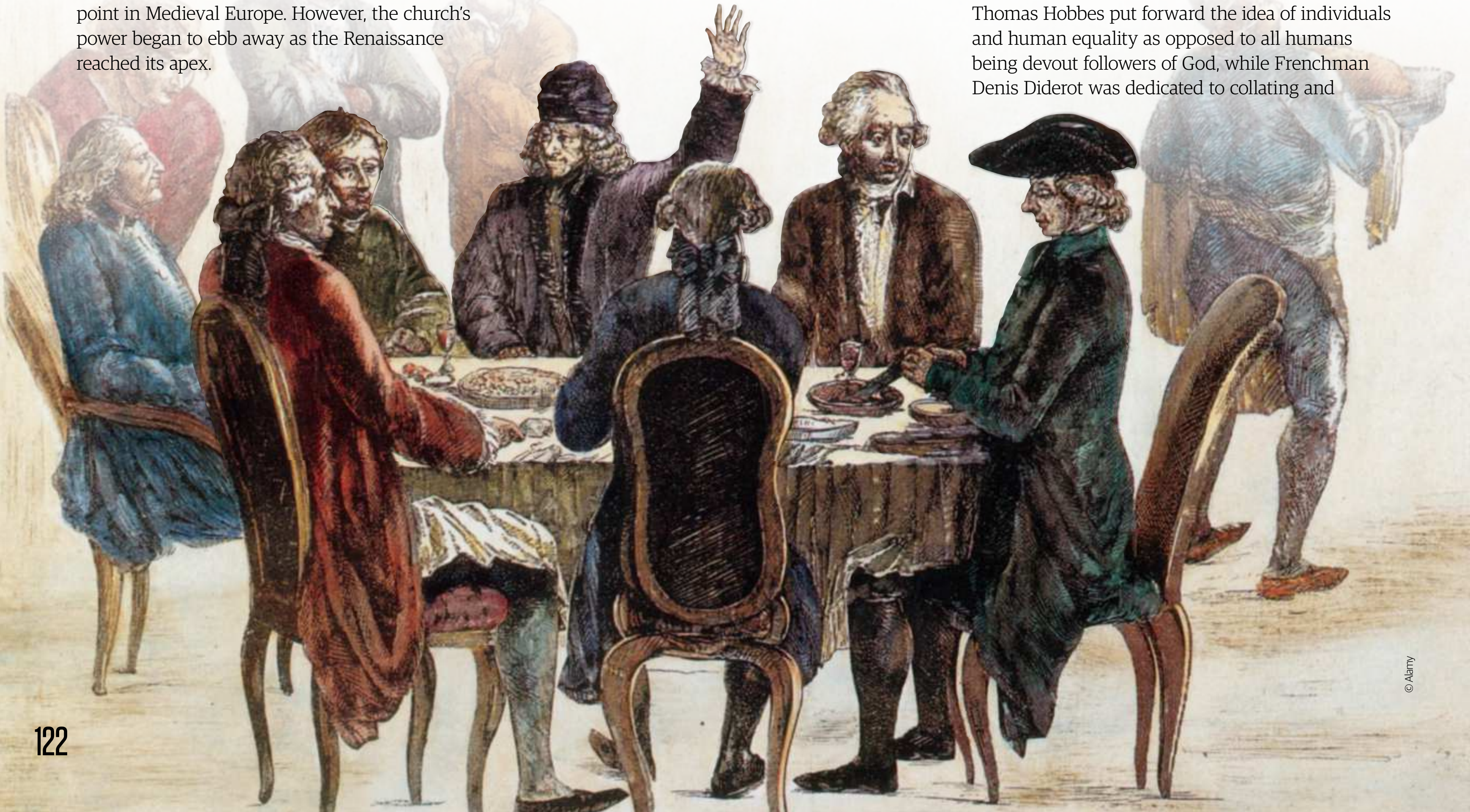
Christianity in the Age of Enlightenment

With the Middle Ages now a distant memory, a new found sense of reason and logic challenged the influence of Christianity

Beginning in the 17th century and ending in the 18th, the Age of Enlightenment was a stern test of Christianity's authority in Europe. The concept of religion changed forever as ideas of reason and scepticism began to come to the fore. The supremacy of the Catholic Church had only increased in Europe since Rome had ended its pagan ways and was at a high point in Medieval Europe. However, the church's power began to ebb away as the Renaissance reached its apex.

This new intellectual outlook was a feature of the lasting effects of the Renaissance and the ideas of humanism. Religious persecution and holy war was rife during and after the Reformation, especially in the Dutch Republic and France where the Remonstrants and Huguenot Protestants in particular were discriminated against, as well as in England, which was set in a post-Cromwellian period of dispute between Anglicans, Presbyterians and Quakers.

The new ways of thinking were centralised primarily in France, Germany and the British Isles. Many academics proved that religion wasn't the sole answer to humanity's questions and what was now seen as logical started to replace true faith in many sections of the population. Englishman Thomas Hobbes put forward the idea of individuals and human equality as opposed to all humans being devout followers of God, while Frenchman Denis Diderot was dedicated to collating and



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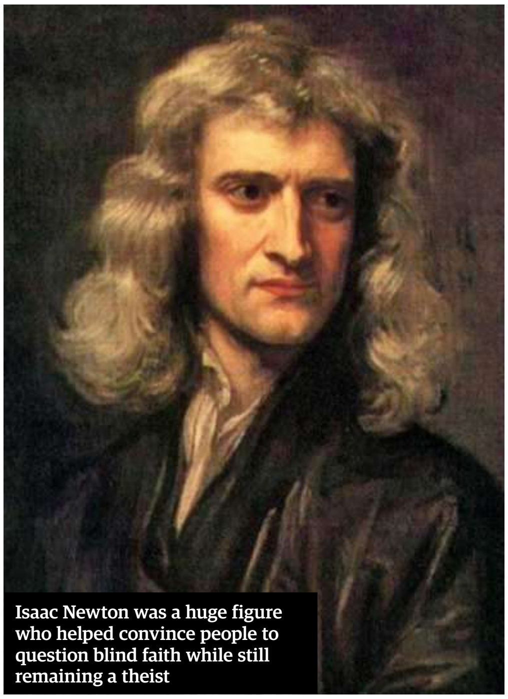
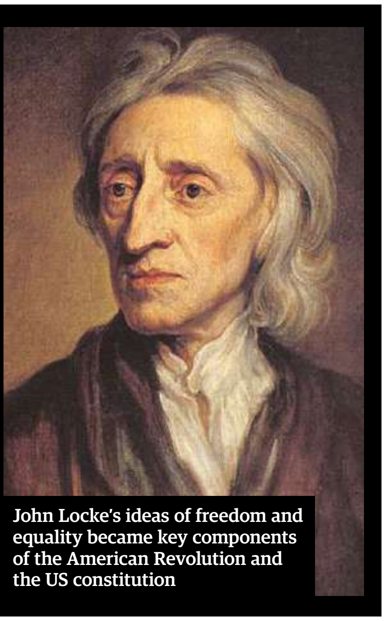


Isaac Newton was a huge figure who helped convince people to question blind faith while still remaining a theist

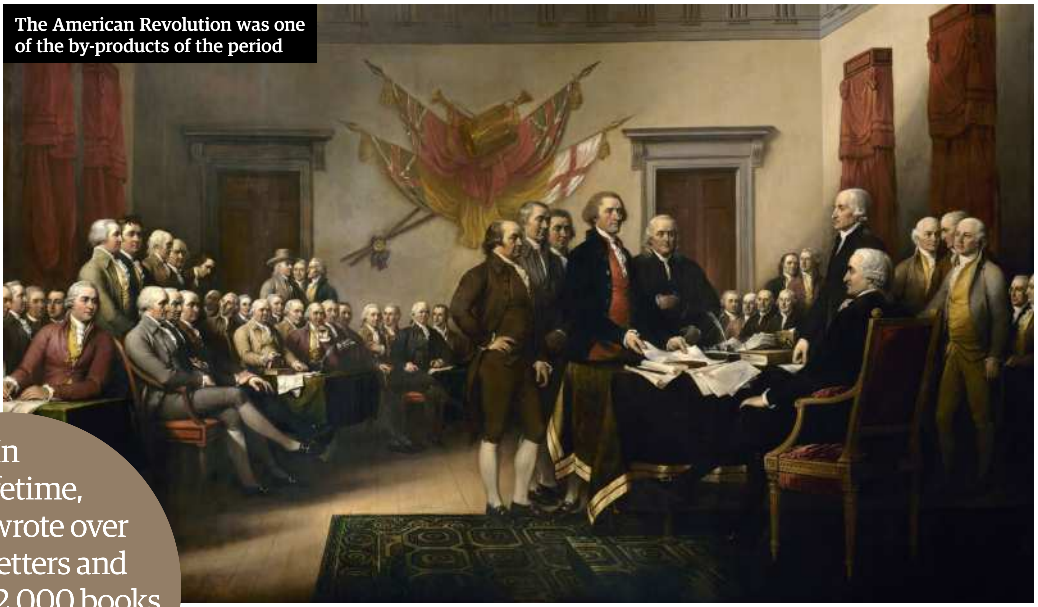
John Locke's impact

One of the key figures of the Enlightenment, John Locke's beliefs altered a lot of what had come before. His view that men, women and children were equal and free helped release the shackles of devotion to power structures like religion, monarchy and government. Locke based the direction of his writing on physical objects and the human senses. Everyone, he believed, was born with a soul but the idea of God and religion wasn't programmed into them from birth. The mind was a blank slate to be written on.

Another prominent intellectual, Voltaire was a keen follower of Locke's lore even though Locke had been long dead when the Frenchman put his pen to paper. Locke's critique also influenced Thomas Jefferson who was instrumental in the birth of the USA. Locke is remembered posthumously for his two great works, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *The Second Treatise of Government*. Despite writing what some would see as rebellious, he was never the archetypal anarchist. He was one of the first to present the ideas of the individual and society as well as the legitimacy of established power structures. His concepts would far outlive him and his ideas of questioning authority and the purpose of humanity are still very important today.



John Locke's ideas of freedom and equality became key components of the American Revolution and the US constitution



The American Revolution was one of the by-products of the period

furthering the human mind through his magnum opus, the *Encyclopédie*. Voltaire also attacked the Catholic Church and believed in social and political progression through freedom of expression. Like many intellectuals of the period, he believed in the separation of the church and the state. The state, he believed, should be free to govern itself with laws and regulations free from religious interference.

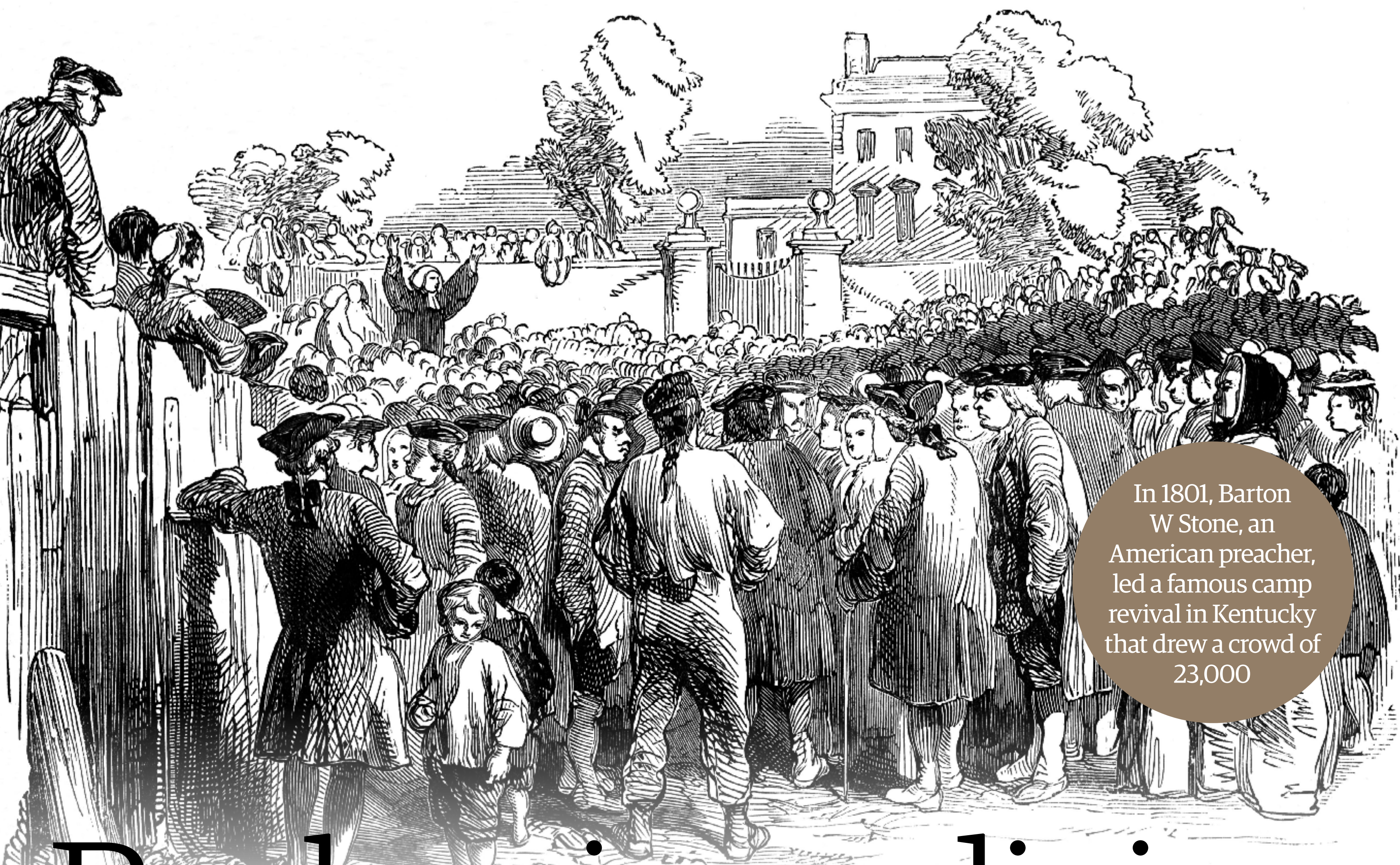
One of the main reasons the importance of the church waned during the Age of Enlightenment was down to a scientific revolution. The methodical reasoning and mathematical formulae of Sir Isaac Newton helped lessen the hegemony the church previously held. Renowned Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus suggested that the Earth revolved around the Sun, a belief that shocked the ecclesiastical world. However the advent of the first telescopes proved this to be true. This led many people to think again and proved to be an embarrassing turning point in the authority of the Catholic Church. This wave of change helped stimulate revolution in France and also in the New World. Proof and rational thought had replaced blind faith, resulting in dissolution of the divine right of kings and holy wars fuelled by religion.

But the Age of Enlightenment wasn't without its ugly side. Revolution took place in both France and the Thirteen Colonies, but while the latter ushered in a new era, the Reign of Terror that followed the former raised doubts about the states that were intent on separating from the church. Some felt that without Catholicism's guiding hand, revolution would bring anarchy and self-destruction.

The Age of Enlightenment also went against the ideas of superstition and supernaturalism. The impact of scholarly discoveries helped form two new types of thought, deism and atheism. Deism was the idea that human intelligence was more important than miracles or the divinity of Christ. Scottish intellect David Hume was one academic who dismissed the idea of miracles and as this occurred, the ideas of visions of angels and demons lessened. In effect, God existed but did not interfere in what appeared and formed on Earth. Atheism meanwhile put forward the ideas of nature and natural order. The effects of the Enlightenment also spread over the Atlantic to the Americas. One of the key men involved in this transition was Founding Father Thomas Jefferson. Written into the Declaration of Independence are the ideas of equality and human rights, ideas central to the Age of Enlightenment. The immovable force of the Catholic Church had been shifted but only slightly and the result was not a complete shunning of religion, instead it signalled an evolution of new unorthodox methods of religious thought. The Bible was now a guide on how to live life rather than a holy tapestry that was followed to the letter.

Even though the sovereignty of the church suffered in the Age of Enlightenment, much of the opposition was directed against the church's role in society not Christianity itself or indeed the belief in God. Boosted by the ideas of Copernicus and Newton, many now believed that God created the universe and science went on to define it, while the theories of John Locke and Voltaire gave people renewed confidence to challenge ideas of old. The Age of Enlightenment was a key turning point for Christianity and human history. The era goes down in history as a period when the ideas and concepts of religion changed and for the first time, religious and scientific thought got closer. New ideas flourished as did a new thirst to attain knowledge. The road to the Industrial Revolution, modern ways of worship and modern science lay ahead.

> In his lifetime, Voltaire wrote over 20,000 letters and more than 2,000 books and was influenced by William Shakespeare



In 1801, Barton W Stone, an American preacher, led a famous camp revival in Kentucky that drew a crowd of 23,000

Reshaping religion in British America

After more than a century of conservative religious worship, the 1730's heralded a wave of emotional religion that converted slave and freeman alike

Still part of the British Empire, early 18th-century America was a conservative land ripe for a religious revolution – a Great Awakening. The arrival of a flamboyant preacher from England in 1739 would ignite a religious wildfire that spread across America as thousands flocked, desperate to hear various evangelical leaders.

George Whitefield, a 24-year-old preacher from London, proved to be the catalyst behind this wide-ranging revitalisation movement. A superb orator, Whitefield began to tour the British Colonies preaching to crowds the benefits of repenting in order to receive forgiveness and thereby passage to the Promised Land.

Unlike the conservative Calvinists, who believed that every soul's fate was sealed and no action could alter its course, men such as Whitefield (who had declared the world his parish) convinced thousands that they could indeed avoid eternal damnation by immersing themselves in a more emotional, personal approach to religion.

Such a belief was shared by many, including a fellow slave owner by the name of Jonathan Edwards from Northampton, Massachusetts. Eschewing his Puritan, Calvinist roots, Edwards extolled the virtues of immediate, personal religious experiences, believing scientific investigation to be useless. Strangely, given their roles in enslaving them, both Edwards and Whitefield shared the belief that only through their Millennial Church could the black community obtain equality. Samuel Davies, a Presbyterian minister and later the fourth president of Princeton University, was credited with inspiring the first major conversion of slaves in Virginia. Such was the inclusive nature of this new age of passionate Christianity.

By encouraging believers to make religion a more personal undertaking, worship became decentralised. No longer did the Church hold all the power; people became more actively involved in their faith and began to study the Bible at home. An emotional, immediate form of religion was making faith more accessible.

Intriguingly, given the previous restraints placed upon them, one of the main beneficiaries of religious revivals were women. Empowered by a society now more open to discussing once privately held convictions, women began to share their feelings and views with one another and also started to write them down.

Slaves also enjoyed a form of emancipation. Believing it imperative that they be taught to read so that they could follow the Bible, ministers instructed slaveholders to educate their slaves. For many this was the first time they had ever received any education, and combined with the explosion in slave conversions to Christianity, it laid the foundations for the first black churches to be established in Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia.

However, as with any societal change, there was resistance. Those that believed in a more emotive approach to religion were known as 'New Lights', while the more puritanical followers of Calvinism, who continued to preach in the old style, were referred to as 'Old Lights'. The old very much wanted to extinguish the new.

In 1742, influential Old Lights passed a law that restricted ministers wishing to lead revivals. They then followed up with a second law that prevented the establishment of a New Light seminary (a religious educational institute). New Lights were even imprisoned or fined in a desperate bid to quash their teachings. And while the New Lights founded their own political organisation with which to fight back and continue to spread their views, revivals did begin to peter out around 1743, as people converted in a wave of emotion before settling down to more straightened lives. However, authority had now been challenged, and the spirit of revivalism would surface again in 1790.

Now occurring across several episodes in a newly independent United States, the Second Awakening was driven by key figures such as Charles G Finney, a Presbyterian Minister who firmly believed in abolishing slavery, and spearheaded by Baptist and Methodist preachers who once again appealed to emotion and the supernatural. Rebuffing the lessons of the Enlightenment, these evangelical leaders took millions of newcomers down a path of Romanticism, many of whom believed in a new millennial age. With the Messiah himself believed to be coming, it was up to humanity to clean up its act before he did. This gave rise to various reform movements, including the push to abolish slavery and grant women more freedom.

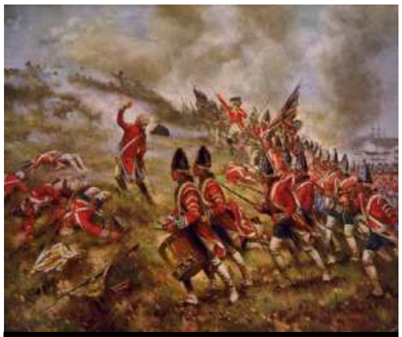
While the first Great Awakening had been particularly felt in New England, this time it was New York State that seemed the hot bed of revivals. Known as the 'Burned-over district' for the crisscrossing map of religious enlightenments that exploded across the state, New York was in fact typical of a wider increase in followers.

Across the now settled frontiers, church missionaries roamed the backwaters and mountains of America to reach the 'unchurched' and bring them into the fold. And while the first had been aimed at existing churches, this Second Awakening gave rise to new churches, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The idea of going back to Christianity's 'primitive' roots also took a firm hold.

As with its predecessor, this flood of emotional conversions trickled to a stop, this time around 1840. It would be followed by the Third Great Awakening in 1855 that once again sought to convince people of the need to purify the world before Christ's coming. The catastrophe of the American Civil War would interrupt but not curtail this less influential movement, which faded out by about 1900 and was then succeeded by the - historically contested - Fourth Awakening of the 1960s to the 1980s.

> The temperance, abolition and women's rights movements all grew in strength and scale during the Second Awakening

The first two Great Awakenings had a huge impact of American society, helping to establish new churches and reform existing ones; empowering women through writing and missionary work; prompting the education of slaves; rejuvenating various reform movements; and, most importantly, encouraging people to challenge the status quo and embark on a journey of self-discovery in an age of strict belief in the old ways. The Awakenings shook the system to the core and in so doing, changed America forever.



The American Revolution was a bloody 18-year struggle for independence partly inspired by the Great Awakenings

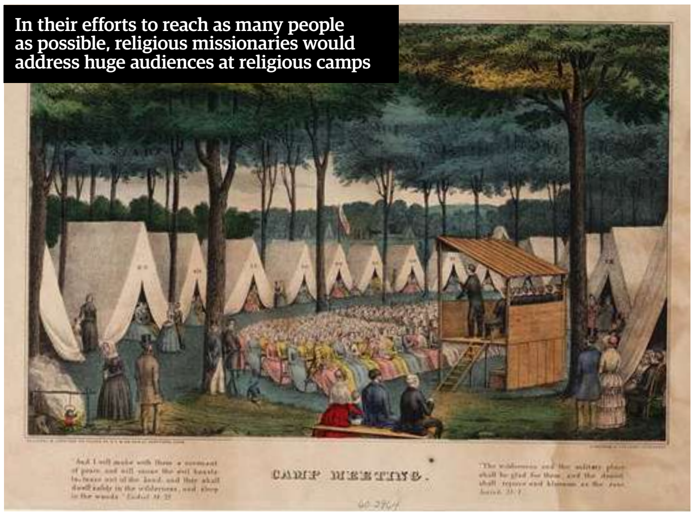
A holy foundation for war

Despite being firmly rooted in a belief in Jesus Christ and the caring, kind virtues of Christianity, the First and Second Great Awakenings helped to lay the foundations for a bloody struggle for independence.

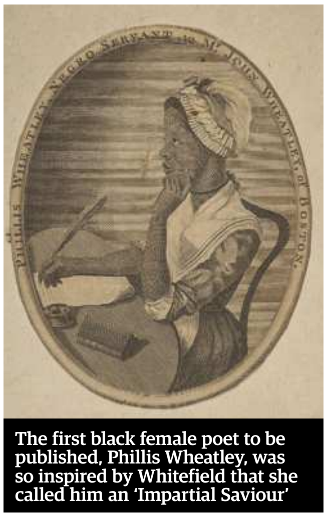
While before people had felt constrained by their beliefs and devoutly followed the teachings of their more educated religious leaders, the social upheaval and conflict from the revivals helped many realise their power to worship belonged in their own hands, and not those of the Church of England, thousands of miles away across the Atlantic.

As numerous religious sects broke away to form their own churches, and the Anglican and Puritan branches witnessed a drastic downturn in their popularity, many began to feel that a new, independent way of thinking and believing was needed. Deferring to England and the long-held understanding that there was only one church and one truth no longer sat well with the congregations.

Emboldened by this new-found religious fervour, the idea of self-governance, and thereby revolution, caught the imagination of many influential characters. John Adams, the second president of the United States, credited the Great Awakenings as a source of the drive towards expelling the British in a war that was even referred to by some as the Presbyterian Rebellion.


CAMP MEETING.

In their efforts to reach as many people as possible, religious missionaries would address huge audiences at religious camps


PHILLIS WHEATLEY, NEGRO SERVANT to MR. JOHN WHEATLEY, of BOSTON.

The first black female poet to be published, Phillis Wheatley, was so inspired by Whitefield that she called him an 'Impartial Saviour'

Christianity in the 20th century

Christianity began the century hoping to make the faith a worldwide religion, but two global wars and the rise of secularisation posed huge challenges

Christianity was flourishing at the dawn of the 20th century – only not in the places where many imagined it would be. For so long a part of European identity (to the point where the continent was labelled Christendom in the Middle Ages), the religion had begun to spread its influence much further thanks to the huge missionary activity which took place after 1885. Protestants and Catholics had targeted areas such as China, India, Latin America and Africa. They had proven so successful that Christianity was soon on its way to becoming a true worldwide religion.

Mulieris dignitatem, written by Pope John Paul II in 1988, said the roles of men and women were complementary

Indeed, for many, the 100 years between 1900 and 2000 was the Christian century, a time when the religion spread its wings at a rapid rate. In June 1910 1,200 Protestants from around the globe met in Edinburgh for the World Missionary Conference and spoke of converting people everywhere to Christianity. Chaired by John R Mott, an American Methodist layman, it sought to bring European and North American Christians together and create churches across the globe. Arguably marking the beginning of the ecumenical movement, it hoped the world could become Christian by the end of the century.

Even so, the religion was having less of an impact in Western Europe. In the 1900s, church attendances were at their lowest for centuries thanks to a combination of the industrial revolution, the growing role of science and rising secularism. There had also been attacks on Christianity by prominent thinkers such as the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche who claimed that it glorified living an apathetic life. World War I caused further damage since many in the West looked upon conflict, disease, famine and the millions dead with great pessimism. As the dust settled in 1918, religion declined in importance in the Western world.

There were, however, other reasons for that. As the second decade drew to a close, the world opened its eyes to see Marxism had risen in Russia in the wake of the revolution which had toppled the tsarist autocracy in 1917. The Russian Orthodox Church was battered for having supported the tsars for many centuries and the Soviet Union set about becoming the first state to ideologically seek the elimination of religion. Christians were persecuted – 28 bishops and 1,200 priests were executed in the five years following the Bolshevik revolution. Yet Russia wasn't an isolated case. Christianity was taking a beating in many quarters.

Japan (which had been contacted by Catholicism in the 16th century and by Protestantism in 1859) occupied Korea in 1910, for instance, and it began to put much effort into minimising the impact of Christian missionaries. It made it compulsory to worship the Japanese emperor in the 1930s, although some Christian Koreans refused, which resulted in a firm link between the religion and the country's patriotic cause. There was a

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There were
9 million Christians in
Africa in the year 1900
and 380 million
by the year 2000

The 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh is seen as the start of the Ecumenical movement for worldwide Christian unity

determination to keep the faith in the face of adversity which is why there were as many as 168,000 Protestants and 147,000 Catholics in Korea at that time. But while great efforts were also put into encouraging neighbouring China and India to convert to Christianity, the struggle was stark.

New Christians in post-World War I Africa, where the religion had been rising fast, had begun to ponder how the Christian armies could fight each other so viciously. They asked the same questions when a global war struck for a second time as World War II. Once again, Christians found it all to easy to bomb, kill and maim those who shared their same beliefs and it was entirely noticeable that, in 1933 – six years before World War II – Germany was almost an entirely Christian nation with around 40 million Protestants and 20 million Catholics. Many of them found support of anti-Semitism in traditional interpretation of religious scriptures. They also found it easy to support Adolf Hitler.

But these were challenging times. Feelings of strong nationalism and anti-communism in Germany grew more intense with the failure of the Weimar Republic, the government of Germany which existed from 1919 until 1933. There was anger at having to pay heavy reparations following World War I and the German Christians could see a way out via the National Socialist German Workers' Party (or Nazis). Lutherans and Catholics, the Führer told them, were the same and could unite as Christians. Most Lutherans who had originally opposed the Nazis accepted Hitler's leadership when he became chancellor.

> Joseph Stalin revived the Russian Orthodox Church in 1941 following Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union

There was still opposition, though. German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who founded the Protestant Confessing Church in 1933, sought to resist Hitler's euthanasia programme and he stood against the genocidal persecution of the Jews. He was arrested in April 1943, imprisoned for 18 months and charged with plotting to assassinate the Führer before being hanged in April 1945. A letter issued by Pope Pius XI on 10 March 1937 (the *Mit brennender Sorge* encyclical) said antisemitism was incompatible with Christianity and he described Hitler as an arrogant prophet. Yet the Catholic Church, in particular, was going through a period of unease.

Pope Pius XI's papacy had ended upon his death on 10 February 1939 and his successor was Pope Pius XII, who had negotiated a treaty between the Vatican and Nazi Germany in 1933 that guaranteed the rights of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany. The Nazis breached this agreement almost immediately but its existence has caused some historians to accuse the pontiff of silent acquiescence to the Holocaust. Pius XII did, however, instruct the rescue of Jews from Nazi persecution. Jewish historian and Israeli diplomat Pinchas Lapide is quoted as saying the pontiff "was instrumental in saving at least 700,000 but probably as many as 860,000 Jews from certain death at Nazi hands." The head rabbi of Rome became a Catholic in 1945 when the war ended.

In the following years, Pius XII sent material aid to Europe and many who resisted Nazism were elevated to the College of Cardinals. Christianity was still under threat, however, as the world continued to come into conflict. Japan's defeat in the war saw Korea carved in two with the north and south looked after by separate governments. It led to the Korean War which lasted from 25 June 1950 to 27 July 1953, during and after which Christians suffered persecution. North Korea was supported by China, which had emerged from Civil War in 1949 as a communist, anti-Western country.

Indeed, Protestants had been in China setting up hospitals and schools for decades but the communists expelled missionaries from the country. A government committee in 1949 sought to force believers into the Three-Self Patriotic Movement – a Protestant church with the principles of self-governance, self-support and self-propagation. Expression of religious life in China was effectively banned during the Cultural Revolution between 1966 and 1976. Elsewhere, churches were falling to communism across Soviet Europe and there was pressure on Christians in Vietnam.

> "Before World War II… Germany was almost an entirely Christian nation"

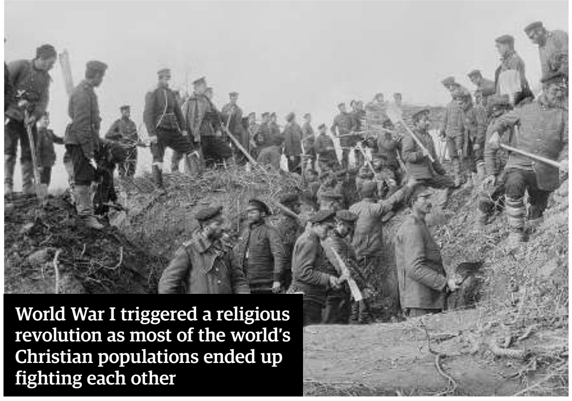
The pope of tech

During the 20th century technology came on leaps and bounds. This was seen starkly during the two world wars, the brutality of which had been mainly due advances in military hardware. Pope Pius XII, who began his papacy in 1939, was interested in technology but more for its social implications. To that end, he built upon the work that had been carried out by his predecessor, Pius XI, who had issued an encyclical, *Quadragesimo anno*, on 15 May 1931 which favoured a line between unregulated capitalism – "the free play of rugged competition" – and socialist collectivism.

Pius XII would seek to relate many areas of life to the Christian faith. He would look at the interest in exploring space, for instance, and examine its effect on humanity. He also sought out the social implications of television, medicine, sport or education, among others. He was a champion of science, seeing it a heavenly sister to religion and he accepted the rhythm method of family planning. While he was undoubtedly controversial – he was seen to protect the Church by negotiating a treaty between the Vatican and Nazi Germany – he preached against selfish nationalism and modern warfare. He also spoke against Hitler on Vatican Radio in 1942.

Pope Pius XII sought to be lenient towards the Axis nations following the war as he advocated peace and reconciliation

The signing of the Reichskonkordat – a treaty that was negotiated between the Vatican and Nazi Germany – took place on 20 July 1933


World War I triggered a religious revolution as most of the world's Christian populations ended up fighting each other

With so much strife, missionaries started to look towards Africa in ever greater numbers and Latin America also saw much growth in Christianity. This was fuelled by Pentecostal and Evangelical Protestant denominations, with Evangelicalism seeing a huge rise throughout the 20th century. Post-World War I, liberalism grew strong – its use of empirical evidence and reason for interpreting life and the Bible resonating with many of the global population. There was also a big push in the 1940s and 1950s thanks to evangelists. Evangelicalism became more conservative in its leanings.

Soon Christianity in Africa took on a life of its own. African initiated churches began being opened on the continent by Africans rather than those from elsewhere. And like those in Latin America, they added their own religious traditions and influences. Liberation theology also became popular in the 1950s and 1960s. It expressed concern for the liberation of the oppressed and it manifested itself in various ways. Dalit theology in India which emerged in the 1980s, for instance, saw indigenous leaders positioning Jesus as someone who could preach good news to the poor. It drew attention to the injustice of the caste system.

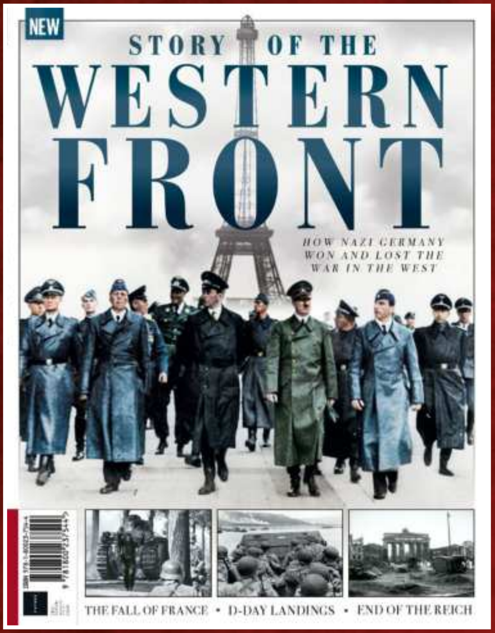
There was further repositioning of Christianity during the century. Pope John XXIII, who reigned from 1958 until 1963, brought reform to Catholicism that allowed the languages spoken by worshippers to be used during Mass, rather than Latin. Communicants could receive both bread and wine, and there was an acceptance of other Christians as brothers and sisters, along with apologies for previous antagonisms against Jews. It opened the Catholic Church to the world and rejected civil discrimination on religious grounds.

Yet the Catholic Church didn't change its stance over abortion, homosexuality and artificial contraception. The opposition to condoms in particular, which had been particularly controversial in Africa, certainly didn't help curtail the spread of HIV and AIDS in the continent. Pope John Paul II, who had been elected in 1978 and saw out the century until his death in 2005, proved conservative with regards to topics such as human reproduction and the ordination of women. He also condemned liberation theology although he was strongly against apartheid in South Africa, opposed the death penalty and embraced evolution.

The Catholic hierarchy supported Francisco Franco's Nationalist forces during the Spanish Civil War of 1936 to 1939

By the century's end, there were more Christians in Africa than there was anywhere else on Earth and the religion is now the faith of the majority of the continent's population. While Western Europe trod a path to secularisation, Christianity also rose in post-communist Eastern Europe and it also grew very strong south of the equator. Christianity didn't succeed in becoming the single, global religion it hoped to be in 1910, however, (the number of Christians grew from 600 million to more than 2 billion, though the world's population tripled in that time), but it certainly helped to shape those intervening years.

HISTORY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES


STORY OF THE WESTERN FRONT
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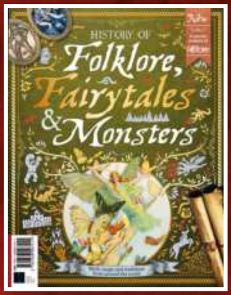
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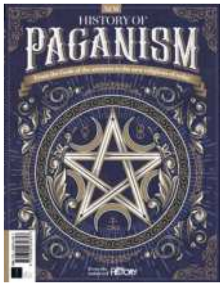
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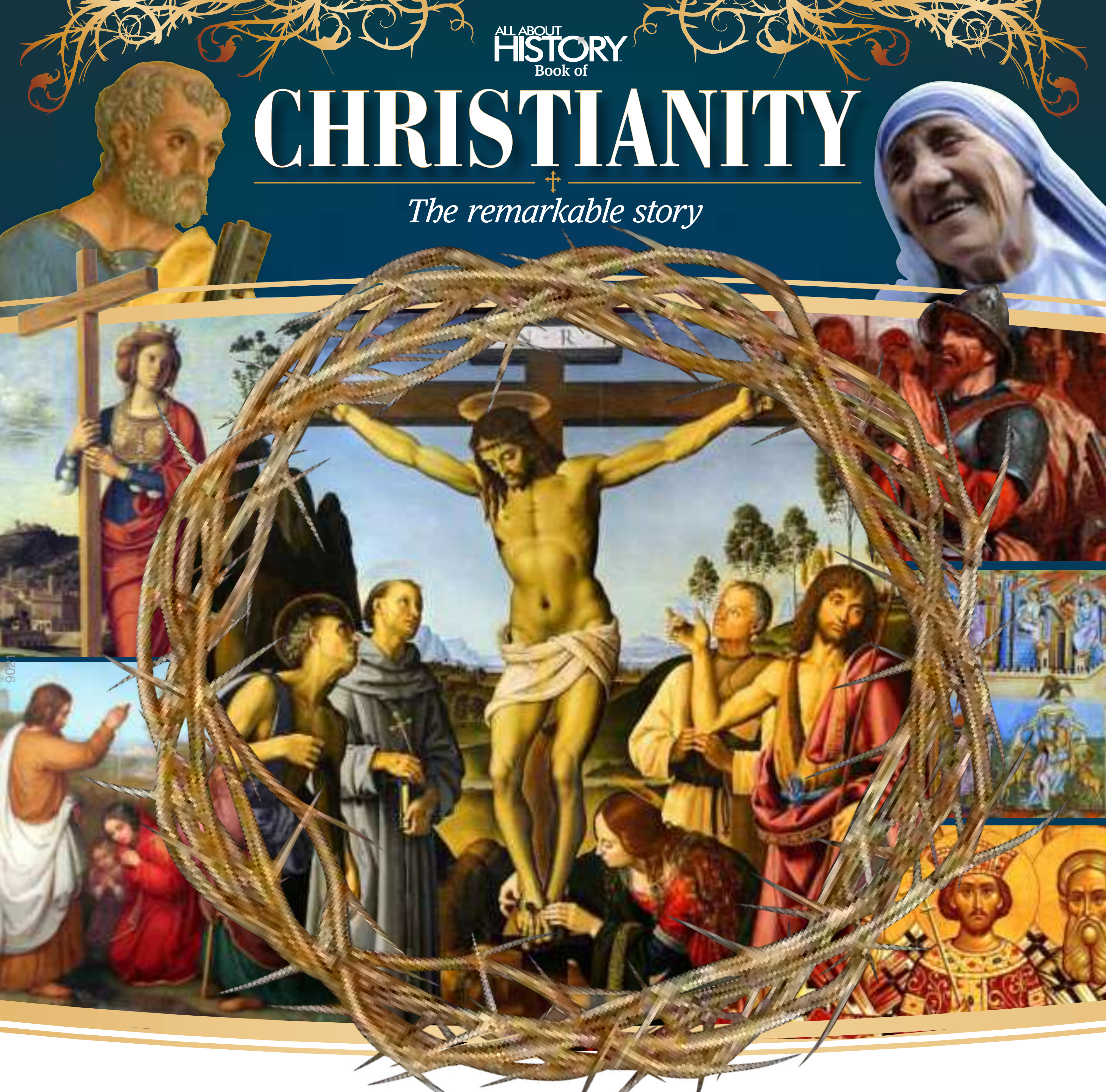

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